



**DELHI UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY**

DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Date of release for loan

DATE OF RELEASE FOR RETURN

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below. An overdue charge of Six nP. will be charged for each day the book is kept overtime.

BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD



KILANGOSI, THE M-SSI ' (AND GRANT'S GAZELLE)

BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

BY

THE HON. R. GORELL BARNES

WITH 69 ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

1911

All rights reserved

To those who know the spread of heaven,
The open plains, the long day's ride,
And by the crackling logs of camp
Feel Life's desire is satisfied ;

To those who have not known, yet love
And in the crowded cities yearn
And, throned upon the restless mind,
To tales of envied freedom turn ;

To those who seek the self-same days,
To those who see the jest of things,
More, to my friends I dedicate
A glorious summer's wanderings.

PREFACE

THIS narrative puts forward no claim to be added to the vast number of admirable text-books upon big-game hunting already before the public. Hunting necessarily plays a part, but its aim is simpler; it desires merely to take the reader for a summer's camping in one of the newest of British possessions, to share with him, as far as may be, the varied humour, interest and charm which make up the life, and to offer some small assistance to any who may intend to experience it for themselves.

I wish to thank my friend, companion and leader for the great help he has given me in the shape of notes, criticisms and photographs; above all, for his generous permission to make free use in the appendix of his excellent and detailed notes upon outfitting. It will be sufficiently obvious to any who read so far that such value as this may have is due entirely to him, and that the responsibility for all its shortcomings must be laid upon my shoulders.

R. G. B.

LONDON, *October* 1911

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERIES

	PAGE
The disadvantages of civilisation—Gaetano's creed—Aden, Jibutil, and the American desert—The blessings of credulity—Kilindini customs—The immaculate gentleman in white—Up the Uganda Railway—Two ways of outfitting—Launched on the unknown	I

CHAPTER II

LION AND LESSER MATTERS

Some legal problems and a sequel—Camp by the rugged rocks—At the lioness's meal and after—Ghostly shapes in the moon-light—The importance of a few feet of jungle—The third lion—Ill-timed coughing—Flash-light and trick-diving—The arrogant Somali—In the crater—Hermes appears—Zim and Tang, "lion-dogs"—The advantages of rain	25
--	----

CHAPTER III

NORTH-EAST FROM GILGIL

A straying mail—Early marches—Under the Aberdares—Olbo-lossat—A first sight of Kenia—Gluttony and ear-tearing—The Somali's cousin—Abdulla's pursuit of boots—Kilangosi, the Masai—Elephants as garden-manure—Rhino on the plain—Asmanic deserts—Two Tommy—A kinless beast—At the junction of the rivers	49
---	----

CHAPTER IV

ON THE GUASO NYIRO

Hungry Wanderobo—Giraffe and gerenuk— <i>Fyari's</i> escapade— The helmet and the thorn-tree—A tribal disagreement— Waking the python—A sudden apparition—"Forcing food from the police"—At the Isiolo	PAGE 73
---	------------

CHAPTER V

UP THE ISIOLO TO MERU AND GUNGA

A first essay at skinning—Riding a lion—Unexpected rhino— Asmanie thinks—An unintentional night-walk—Superfluous energy and a tired safari—At Meru—A thief in camp— Above Lake Gunga	91
---	----

CHAPTER VI

IN THE FORESTS NEAR MERU

Trials of the jungle—The accused rhino—The definition of an accident—A prophetic utterance—The African elephant at home—A glorious hour—A cannibalistic carnival—The great elephant-dance	112
--	-----

CHAPTER VII

SIDE-LIGHTS

A plea for lingerers—The African dawn—The hours after dark— A memorable group—The co-existence of kingship and in- significance—The nonentity of Time—Haircutting extra- ordinary—Care of the trophies—Medical gossip and popular dentistry—An unwelcome intruder—An old lady of Meru hears the devil—Tribal songs recorded—The friendship of <i>tengeneza</i> —A gramophone and a sonnet	130
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII

FROM MERU TO EMBU VIA NYERI

Kenia and the clouds—Heart v. height—A glorious ride—"Let good digestion wait on—elephant"—Kilangosi leaves us—On
--

CONTENTS

xi

PAGE

the way in to Nyeri—Untidy safaris—Indrins and an auction —The use of wivies—Variety on the road—A shocking sight —Karanja's hospitality—A formal call	150
--	-----

CHAPTER IX

M'BOGO, THE BUFFALO

The difficulties of long grass—The buffalo wins a trick—Un- necessary nerves—Religion spoils a feast—Vindictive beasts —The interest of swaying grass—Rhino—An egg-buying interlude—The art of tree climbing—A fiery success—The buffalo gives his version	166
--	-----

CHAPTER X

THE END OF THE SAFARI

A final view of Kenya—Hippo in the Tanzi—"Well run, hippo" —A tribe of children—Free food—The handling of bullock —Camp is strangely quiet—Oweru's idea of a promise—The rise and fall of Kiboko—The joys of motoring—Selling off— The real end	183
---	-----

CHAPTER XI

AFTER DAYS

A wonderful country—The recession of game—Pax Britannica— The Hindi man—The point of view—An uncomfortable stage—The little unknown and his chickens—A typewriter —The working of the charm—Morals v clothes—Entebbe— Kampala—Jinja and the Ripon Falls—"Gangways up"	206
---	-----

APPENDIX

PRACTICAL OUTFITTING

The <i>personnel</i> of a safari—Personal camp equipment—Camp equipment for the men—General camp equipment—Field-kit —Rifles—Medical and surgical	225
---	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

“ Kilangosi, the Masai ” (and Grant’s Gazelle) . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
“ The Kilindini Customs ” }	12
East African Navvies }	
“ The Indian store ” }	
“ The government offices . . . are distinctly lacking in grandeur as yet ” }	18
“ It was a splendid beast ” }	37
“ Up the Uganda Railway ” }	
“ <i>Pasho</i> ” (Oweru in centre) }	47
“ The long snake-like line of the safari ” }	
“ The crossings of the little streams ” }	50
“ Through a vast English park ” }	
Rumuruti }	55
“ A fairly good horn ” }	
“ Another Tommy . . . fell dead too ” }	67
“ Past the great granite kopjes ” }	
Oryx Beisa }	71
“ Our headman . . . crossed at intervals ” }	
“ We crossed easily ” }	72
“ In their ungainly, seesaw gallop ” }	
“ A calf, old enough to fend for itself ” }	76
“ A mountainous and rugged country ” }	
“ We looked right over a vast . . . plain ” }	79
“ A great water-python ” }	
“ As thick round as a man’s thigh ” }	83
“ The sandy thorn-scrub ” }	
Grévy’s zebra and Abdulla }	88

	FACING PAGE
"The oldest porter . . . Kaparimba"	92
"Their splendid, spear-like horns" (and Punda Melia)	106
The end of the ride	109
"One of the most attractive scenes"	124
"In a kind of jumping dance"	130
"A dance of the Meru women"	134
"It sank down upon its knees, stone dead"	138
"Its tusks, though very thick, were rather short"	145
"The greater bustard"	152
"The tents are all pitched"	154
"A crouching group by their fire"	159
"Used to shave each other's heads"	160
"The care of the trophies"	163
"With some difficulty extracted it"	168
"A warrior of the Meru"	173
"At Meru . . . some belles"	178
Some of the great, moss-hung trees	188
"The head of the line"	194
"Proceeded to fortify himself against the hungers"	200
"Nyeri . . . lies in the hills"	
"Carrying huge logs for house-building"	
"Some Kikuyu women working in the fields"	
"A little hut"	
"Karanja . . . attended us with his sub-chiefs"	
"The thick fringe of brush along the river"	
"In long grass"	
"It reached about to our knees"	
"It had been dead for many hours"	
"Camp was like a butcher's shop"	
"A shot . . . ended him"	
"Abdulla . . . in the rôle of egg-tester"	
"Along the Embu-Fort Hall road"	
"Stopped for a few moments to bathe"	
Ant-hill and camp; a study in proportions	
"A wildebeeste"	
Kiboko, Abdulla, and Oweru all eating for once	
"Once we broke down"	

Babes in the African Wood

CHAPTER I

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERIES

The disadvantages of civilisation—Gaetano's creed—Aden, Jibutil, and the American desert—The blessings of credulity—Kilindini customs—The immaculate gentleman in white—Up the Uganda Railway—Two ways of outfitting—Launched on the unknown.

It was the beginning of June, and I was leading a blameless, or at any rate an innocuous, existence in a barrister's chambers in London, busy with my admiration for the subtle comprehensiveness of the words "to wit" as shown in indictments, with my highest flight of sportive fancy rising to grouse in Scotland, and the strong probability being that my holiday humour would be found eventually among the mixed bathers on an English beach, when my American friend C. descended like an avalanche upon my life, and whirled it in a single evening round upon its axis; briefly, in place of rabbits he substituted rhino. There

2 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

would seem to be two ways of getting the greatest enjoyment out of a long hunting trip—one to live in it for months and even years beforehand planning and arranging every detail, the other to have it dropped from the skies into the routine of a town life. When C. sailed for British East Africa, he was starting on a trip he had planned and failed to take five separate times; he had hunted in many lands, and much that befell him was taken as a matter of course. I had never shot, and never expected to shoot, anything larger than a blackcock or a hare; had never been out of Europe, and therefore throughout the trip the humours and interests of African camp-life remained invested for me with a sense of delightful novelty—the asset, in fact, of inexperience.

C. had only one evening in London on his way through from Boston to Nairobi, and I met him almost by chance. We had not seen each other since we had been shooting together in Suffolk five years before, an occasion on which the old gamekeeper, hearing he was just off to Ceylon after elephant, merely grunted and observed with a dry chuckle, "H'm; they're a sight bigger'n a partridge." The whole plan, therefore, was a bomb-shell; he departed on his journey leaving

me pledged to follow immediately, and I retired to shoot whole bands of lions with the greatest possible ease and enjoyment all night. The place of our next meeting was a camp nearly 7,000 miles away, and he was fresh from the death of a lioness.

The week which followed was simply bursting with hasty discoveries. In the first place, it was an unique opportunity for gauging my own importance; let any one in a young and irresponsible position suddenly announce his immediate and complete withdrawal from the life he is leading and the places which know him, and he will be astonished to find what little difference it will really make to any one. Perhaps "any one" is too wide, but many a friend who, he hopes, will miss him sadly, will meet him after six months or a year, with the most refreshing *sang-froid* and say cheerfully, "Hullo: I haven't seen you for some time; been away?" "Been away!" you echo disgustedly; "I've been camping in Africa!" The probability is he will reply in a conventional tone, "Oh, that must have been good fun," and go on to regale you with some particularly dull events which happened to him.

At the same time civilisation is like a woven cloth, and no piece of it can be snipped away without leaving any number of trivial ends.

4 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

For example, I had engaged to raise a team for a cricket match. It was to be played in a fortnight's time, and, not including myself, I had collected together just three men ; I had now to persuade one of these to raise the remaining eight, and any one who has ever been similarly placed can understand the delicacy of the position. Ends were everywhere, and I had a week to bind them all up decently and fit myself out as well. I discovered that the world in general dislikes being hurried, and that traffic goes at a stroll ; in consequence, the heels I trod on were absolutely innumerable and I became very much disliked. Looking back on it, I recall with envy the nonchalant ease of the African. At Mombasa a fellow-traveller wished to engage a servant to take with him into Uganda for a couple of years or more, and some were brought to the station by a friend for his inspection. One seemed satisfactory and was engaged ; he shook hands with two or three of his fellows, and got quietly into the train. He had ten minutes in which to make his preparations for two years, and found nine and a half rather an encumbrance ; I had a week to make mine for six months, and found it all too short.

I reached Marseilles burdened with a host of unnecessary packages and lacking in much

that I really needed, and, having promptly bought a deck chair, lay on it with little intermission until the steamer entered the bay of Naples. We were to be there a whole day, and I and two fellow-passengers decided to make the time-honoured excursion to Pompeii. I am glad that we did so, for but for *this I might have never known the virtues* that lay concealed in Gaetano. To outward appearance he was merely a podgy, middle-aged guide, flavoured with garlic and endowed with a smile which reduced his eyes to slits and was lost beneath his ears; but there was a strange, infectious drollery about that smile, and what difficulties withstood it, his clucking laugh effaced. He piloted us gaily and skilfully, but it was not until I was again at Naples on my voyage home that I learnt all it was given him to become.

Our time ashore then was shorter by many hours, but a party from the ship were anxious to have at least a glimpse of Pompeii. Gaetano was smiling away on the deck, and I recommended them to his guidance. He announced that there was time for the excursion, and he verified this with scrupulous accuracy, for the steamer had sounded her warnings and the gangways were just about to be raised when a boat was observed making for her as fast

6 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

as the straining oarsmen could row ; the anxious faces of the party looked out of it, and Gaetano sat in the stern, steering with cheerful serenity on his face and words of encouragement on his lips. He had good reason for his self-satisfaction ; they had arrived at the station in the morning to find that the one train, by which it was possible for them to go in the circumstances, was already filled to overflowing. Gaetano glanced down it with the eye of an experienced general, and never hesitated a moment. He advanced with his most ingratiating air upon a cohort of American tourists, and informed them courteously that the train for Pompeii was about to start from the opposite side of the station. Out they bundled with profuse and hasty thanks : Gaetano handed his own party in, and the train moved off as the deluded Americans rushed furiously back along the platform. What cared Gaetano ? His creed was simple ; he was bound to provide for those who had placed themselves under his escort ; he had done his duty, and, leaning back, he proceeded with a tranquil conscience to roll himself a cigarette.

At Port Said I learnt Arabic ; at least I learnt to say "Imshi," which I was told means "Go away," and by dint of constant practice I had become quite proficient in the few hours

before we left the rascally scum behind us and entered the Suez Canal. Here the thermometer leapt up twenty degrees in a single night: damp, intolerable, and airless heat wrapped us round like a blanket, and until we rounded Cape Guardafui a week later, everybody became exceedingly unpleasant. Yet I was better off than C. had been, for he sailed by the French line, and coaled all night at Jibutil in French Somaliland. Aden looked just a barren rock, glared on by the sun, and he said both places reminded him most strongly of a certain sign in the American desert which ran, as far as he could recollect:—"400 miles from Daggert, 150 miles from Coyote holes, 40 miles from wood, 40 miles from water, 40 feet from Hell; God bless our home." Of Aden a man has been heard to say that if he owned both Aden and Hades, he would let Aden and live in Hades; he had obviously a touching faith in the alluring powers of an advertisement.

I made a new discovery on the long run from Aden to Kilindini; I call it new because every young traveller passes through the stage of finding out with pleased conceit what is stale to the rest of the passengers: it was the strange way in which the jumbled crowd of the first evening gradually resolved itself

into so many separate individualities. I was travelling by the German line, and the majority of the passengers were Germans on their way to Dar-es-Salaam, the port of German East Africa ; but language proved the usual regrettable obstacle, and both nationalities kept very much to themselves. The English, however, had by now fallen into three clearly-marked divisions, the government official, the trader, and the sportsman. All, except one man belonging to the latter class, were men of wide experience, and they adopted an attitude of bored resignation to a voyage which meant to most the end of all society and the return to work in a wild land. For the most part the first division foregathered with the third, and both took little note of the second ; yet this seemed to me an error born of snobbery, for the traders were without exception men leading lives of considerable interest, and some were endowed with very unusual attainments. I remember vividly how one spent the whole of an evening giving me a singularly lucid exposition of the fourth dimension ! I had expected to learn many things in my summer, but I had certainly not reckoned this as one of them.

Round Cape Guardafui we met the monsoon, and social activities lapsed suddenly ; but on

crossing the line, a day out from Kilindini, we got into smoother water, and there was a sudden burst of conviviality. I was writing quietly on deck when my attention was called to a young German, whose guileless countenance had already excited the steamer's admiration. He was now parading the deck dressed as if about to go ashore; in addition to a ludicrous sporting get-up, he had a gun slung over one shoulder and a thermos flask over the other, and by himself he was good to look upon. Something seemed to be on foot, so I went to the rail where most of the passengers were assembled, and looked down on to the lower deck. Three or four other Germans were already sitting expectantly in the ship's launch, and, as I watched, the sportsman descended and climbed in too.

It appeared that a fellow-German, moved by *ennui* or the love of joking, had informed them that an island lay near on which game abounded in prodigious quantity; one account said elephants, another rabbits. It was all one to these gallant spirits; they were out for blood in either case, and in their trustful eagerness had quite omitted to notice that the ocean lay islandless around them. There they sat in readiness in the launch, which was, so they were informed, to meet the ship again

10 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

at Kilindini ; the laughter of the assembled onlookers must have sounded merely envious in their ears, and they sat on serenely until the joker gave the word, and the quartermaster crept along with the hose and the whole ship rocked with laughter at the deluge and the sudden, sad, surprised awakening and the frantic scramble that ensued. It was obvious, however, that the Englishman is not the only person who knows how to take a joke ; the half-drowned victims joined in the laughter with the same sporting spirit as had led them into the launch.

What a blessing these credulous folk are when the tedium of a long sea-voyage has to be encountered ! I heard of one man, who was a positive godsend to a whole ship's company. He was an honest English farmer, who had never been beyond his native dale until circumstances compelled him late in life to take a long voyage. He knew nothing and believed everything—a man to fill the very worst liar with unexpected thrills of lawless delight. The whole ship set out with one accord to rival Ananias, and by all accounts they succeeded pretty well. Strange and ingenious was the information that honest farmer acquired, and often had he to confess with deep surprise that he had had no idea

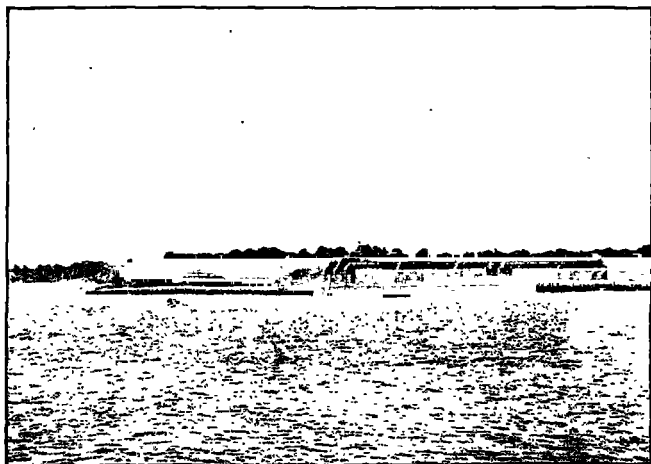
such things could happen in the world ; but the *chef-d'œuvre* of the voyage, as all agreed, was the punctuality of the Southern Cross. He was told that the day the ship crossed the line, at nine o'clock in the evening precisely, up would come the Southern Cross. The evening found the farmer on the deck, watch in hand, and, wonderful to relate, on the stroke of nine up did come the Southern Cross, dexterously swung from the yard-arm by means of a small pulley and a cord.

Our steamer was not distinguished for speed, and we got in at Kilindini, the beautiful port of British East Africa, at the close of the twentieth day from Marseilles ; the intense darkness of an African night fell suddenly just after we had come to anchor. It was a Thursday evening, and the train for Nairobi and the Victoria Nyanza left at eleven o'clock next day ; the one after that did not start until Monday, so that there was little time to be lost unless for some strange reason a stay in Mombasa was desired. To a man accustomed to Oriental ports the scene may not have been anything unusual ; to me it was one of indescribable confusion. Hordes of natives, all as alike to the eye of a new arrival as two peas, swarmed and jostled everywhere, in their boats by the gangway and even on the decks ;

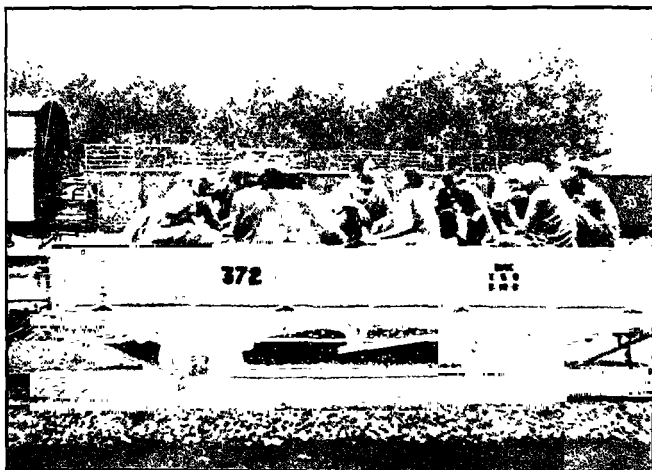
12 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

such order as is maintained at Port Said, and, I believe, at Dar-es-Salaam was wholly lacking here. In the daylight, disembarkation would have been a troublesome and tedious process: in the darkness, it had to be managed just as it could. My own particular sense of bewilderment was not lessened by a letter from my friend, informing me that he had left Nairobi, our original meeting-place, and I was to come straight on to his camp in the Kedong Valley, near Kijabé; as I hadn't a notion where that was, and was burdened with steamer trunks, that didn't seem to assist me much.

It was by the kind assistance of a travelled fellow-passenger, who joined forces with me, that the Kilindini customs were reached at last. These proved to be a large tin-roofed shed, lit dimly by a few oil lamps: low benches, on which the luggage was dumped, formed a circle in the centre, and caged within it were two or three hot and worried Indian *babus*, the regular clerks of the East African Government. Everybody was in a hurry to reach Mombasa and dinner; everybody vociferously abused the *babus* to make them pass their luggage; nobody could see clearly, and round the outskirts of the circle natives and hotel boys struggled in motley confusion; tucked away at the corners of the shed were the desks



"THE KILINDINI CUSTOMS"



EAST AFRICAN NAVVIES

of a few more *babus*, who spent an interminable time marking every rifle and gun and analysing the bills thereof for the *ad valorem* duty. It was not a landing calculated to impress upon a stranger the great potentialities of the Protectorate.

Our troubles were by no means over when our luggage had been passed and stacked ready to be sent up to the Station at Mombasa in the morning. There was at least an apology for lighting in the shed; outside was inky blackness, and it was necessary to walk through it for two or three hundred yards before the little trolley lines were reached; to break one's neck at the outset would have been a disappointing but a singularly easy thing to do. Kilindini has now been granted a sum for the improvement of its harbour facilities, and every traveller will pray that this may include the very small and very essential improvement of bringing the trolley lines down to the quay instead of ending them with maddening inconsequence 300 yards away.

The short ride up to Mombasa was strikingly weird; two natives ran along pushing the *gharri*, as the little trolley car is called; a fresh, sweet scent was in the air, and every now and again, suddenly thrust forward from the roadside by the light of the swinging lamp,

14 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

the huge trunk of an old mango-tree would loom vaguely out of the night. I shall not forget my first evening on East African soil in a hurry, but C.'s experience had an individuality about it all its own.

He arrived in daylight, and, like myself, was anxious to get ashore as quickly as possible to catch the train up country without a stay in Mombasa. He made a deal with the four rowers of one of the boats to take him and his seven pieces of luggage for a rupee and a half—that is, only ten cents above the scheduled government charges. He was busy with three of the boatmen, getting his luggage to the boat, when he suddenly became aware of an immaculate gentleman in white, who was bowing to him and saying "Good morning, Mr. C., good morning. Delighted you got in so early; this is Mr. C., isn't it?" On being informed it was, he introduced himself and explained he was acting for a certain agency and had been asked to meet him. C. had formed no definite plans for dealing with any agent at all, and told him so, adding politely that he greatly appreciated his courtesy in calling. Meanwhile all the luggage had been put down, and the men were standing by the side of it, and, when told to take it up, they merely looked at the gentleman in white, who then explained that

they were to go ashore in his boat, which would be there presently. C. told him that he already had a boat, was in a hurry, and proposed to go at once, but that he didn't object to company.

He was delayed a moment in his cabin, and when he got to the ship's side he saw to his horror that his heavy trunk, weighing about 350 lb., and containing everything most necessary to him for his trip, was being slowly and surely pushed over the edge of the gangway on to the shoulders of one poor Swahili, who stood in the extreme bow of a small boat. He shouted in vain; down went the box on the Swahili's shoulders. The Swahili staggered and fell against the ship's side, and the boat began to move slowly away from under him. The gentleman in white stood with his mouth open. Luckily there was a rope handy, and C. swung down into the boat, landing on top of an Arab and rolling in the bottom, just as with a great splash the box fell into the water. He had just time to jump from boat to boat and grab it by a rope after it was actually under water and the bubbles coming up. The devoted Swahili still kept hold; and with the help of an old Arab it was got out and into the boat. The most astounding part of the whole episode was that not a single passenger even

16 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

smiled. By this time C. was wet through and literally covered with dirt and rust; the gentleman in white restored his countenance to its normally blank expression, and they stepped into the boat and were rowed ashore.

At the Customs House the gentleman in white sat on a table and smoked a cigarette, while the customs clerk went through the luggage; then after having had his luggage sent to the station, C. proposed walking to Mombasa, as he wanted exercise; but the gentleman in white was horrified at the thought of so much exertion, and insisted on riding in a *gharri*, and as he had C.'s cartridges somewhere, to follow him was a necessity. No cartridges may be taken across France, a prohibition which caused me an infinite amount of trouble to circumvent, and it is a practical impossibility to take them on the mail steamers—it can be done, but only by special arrangement—so C. had consigned his to the agency thus represented, vainly supposing that they would meet him in Nairobi. But no, they were in Mombasa, “somewhere in Mombasa”—the gentleman in white wasn't quite sure where—he would see to them at once, but first, being a man of business as well as an inimitable humorist, he would present his bill:—
Item No. 1, For the boat ashore—5 rupees.

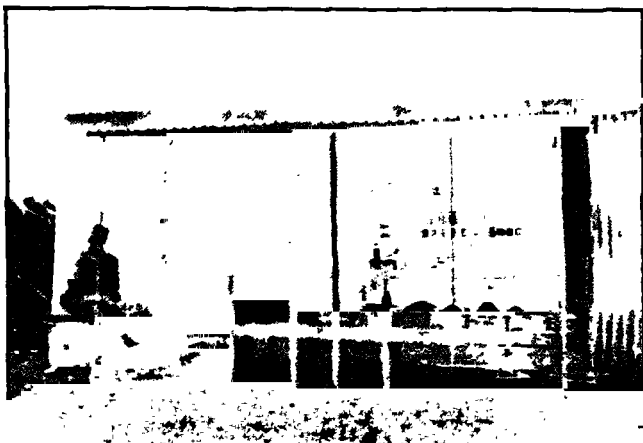
He had paid merely to avoid the necessity for changing French money. Item No. 2, For luggage from Kilindini to Mombasa—7 rupees 50 cents. The regular rate is about 50 cents a package, and C. had seven. Item No. 3, and grand finale, For seeing C. through the customs—30 rupees! That was a master-stroke of bill-making! C. said he recalled the scene at the Customs House—his big trunk unpacked, the rifles even to their innermost parts soaked with sea-water, chocolate melting into the phonograph, and Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* running red from its cover down over his collars, handkerchiefs, and shirts, till each contained at least one vivid spot, while the gentleman in white soothed himself upon a table with a cigarette. The situation, however, was painfully simple: he had the cartridges and C. had his bill, and delay in the one meant delay in the other. Beyond staying, perhaps for days, in Mombasa, and looking after the matter personally, there was nothing to do but to accept the situation. C. rose to the occasion, thanked him for his unbounded courtesy, paid him in cash, and got into the train. "Buncoed," as he said, after one hour in Africa!

It would seem to be the almost universal custom among sportsmen to place themselves

18 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

and their luggage unreservedly in the hands of an agent, for the disembarkation, at any rate. I saw a typical instance, when all that the sportsmen in question had to do was to pay their bill. They didn't even have to get themselves to Mombasa ; it was all arranged for them. No doubt this saved an infinity of trouble, but the interest, experience, and after-glow of humour that they missed doesn't bear thinking about.

The journey up the Uganda Railway is probably the most wonderful railway journey in the world. For one thing, the line rises as it crosses the Equator to over 8,000 feet, and so embraces an extraordinary variety of climate. The traveller starts at mid-day perspiring in his thinnest clothes, and at dawn is eagerly piling on all the blankets he can find. Then for many hours the line forms the eastern boundary of the great Southern Game Reserve, and the journey has been likened, without incurring the charge of gross exaggeration, to travelling through a Zoological Gardens, the wonderful difference being that it is the animals which are free and the spectators who are caged. The animals know their sanctuary now, and graze undisturbed close to the passing train ; the commoner species of antelope can always be seen in their



"THE INDIAN SITU"



"THE GOVERNMENT OFFICES" AKI DISTRICT JAILING
IN GRANDLUR AS YLI

[S. page 20]



herds, and occasionally the sight of a giraffe or a lion will reward the watcher. The sister of my host in Nairobi was lucky enough to see a band of lions scatter on each side of the train on her very first journey up from the coast. In the early days of nine or ten years ago stations were held up by lions, rhinos used to charge the trains, and shooting was allowed from the windows, but the day of these excitements is all but passed away.

According to our ideas, the going is very slow; the whole distance from Mombasa to Kisumu, the terminus on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza, is not 600 miles, and it takes 48 hours; but the ascent must be taken into consideration, and then, again, what possible meaning has time to an East African native? He will arrive when the train does, and that is all that matters, and the Europeans out there seem to have fallen into the same way of thinking. On the journey to the coast, for instance, the train will calmly spend the night at Nakuru so as to arrive at Naivasha at a reasonable hour for breakfast, since restaurant cars are unknown.

I was only a few days in Nairobi, staying, as most do, at the Norfolk Hotel, just to sort out my luggage into portable loads, discard the mass of unnecessary articles I had brought

along on the good old theory that they "might come in useful some time," get a game licence at the government offices, which are distinctly lacking in grandeur as yet, and generally prepare to make my way to the unknown camp. C. had had a much more strenuous time; as arranged, he had met his friend J. C., who had already been out on safari,¹ and they had decided to go back over a part of his old route, where there seemed to be a good chance for lions, and wait there until I joined them. With these plans they had settled to the work of outfitting in earnest. Now there are two distinct ways of outfitting; one is to do it yourself, and the other, and the usual, to sit down and let an agent do it for you, and then pay the bill, if possible. J. C., to save time, had already tried the second way, and the agents' estimate for a month's safari had differed from their bill for the same by no fewer than 800 rupees. A sportsman can outfit himself for about £30 a month, and an agent will offer to do it at a reduction for £100 a month, which fails to include many necessary things. There was, in addition, that in the episode of the immaculate gentleman in white which had given my friends food for reflection.

¹ Safari, literally="caravan," but it has come to be used generally for the whole outfit and expedition.

Besides, in C.'s words, it is absurd to make out that there is any extraordinary difficulty about outfitting a safari, and if a man has outfitted in other parts of the world he can do it in Africa. It merely requires a little study and attention to the local customs and conditions. He is in the tropics, and the sun must be dealt with. His transport is by porters, and they and their outfit and ways must be considered. Wherever he goes, he faces similar propositions, whether his transport is by canoe, packhorse, or bullock cart, and he must learn his part or he cannot do his job. That is to say, if he does not learn these very essentials of the modes of travel, he must not only pay another to outfit him, but also to lead his party, while he himself sinks to the position of a mere passenger and leaves the country as ignorant of it as when he came there. The only reason for the expedition's being is because of him ; of right he is its leader in name, and of right the responsibility for the men rests with him ; and what excuse has he except laziness or incompetency for shifting these things to another ? Too many of the rich and idle who shoot in Africa hold the other view, and because of them the name of " safari-man " is a jest throughout the Protectorate. He is looked on as fair game, and every one makes

him pay to the full extent of his means, asks "Who is looking out for him?" or "Who is taking him round?" Let the sportsman rather learn something of the language, how to tell good *posho* (the porters' food, common ground meal) from bad by tasting it himself; the size and cost of blankets, *sufurias* (cooking-pots), and the best brand of *pangas* (knives). Let him settle the disputes of his men himself, look after their ailments, and learn to know them individually and their tribal peculiarities. Let him enforce his own discipline, and punish swiftly and justly until they respect him as their leader. Let him walk among their fires at night with a jest for this man and a pat on the back for this, calling each by his name, till they are his friends and will follow him wherever he leads.

There can be little doubt that if the sportsman will follow this sane advice, he will leave Africa with a far more intimate and valuable understanding and feeling for the country and its people; he will also have the satisfaction of living as part of his surroundings and not as a mere firer of a rifle. At any rate, speaking for myself, I know that my education was in good hands, and it became more and more clear to me as our safari proceeded, that, enthralling as the sport of hunting big game

undoubtedly is, the life which is a necessary accompaniment to it has an even greater charm, and this to those who have their eyes and minds fixed only on the game has very little meaning or interest.

My two friends, imbued with these ideas, determined to shift for themselves. C. conversed with most of the various agencies, and having learnt their charges for the articles required betook himself to the Indian bazaar, where he had a great time, and, with the aid of a smattering of Hindustani, saved about 40 per cent. Soon his rooms at the Norfolk Hotel began to look like the nucleus of a jumble sale, and to his purchases he added a quantity of second-hand camp outfit by a call on Messrs. Newland, Tarlton & Co. There now remained only the animals, and, as he said, horse trading is much the same all the world over, and *David Harum* was not written in vain. He was anxious to ride lion if he got the chance, and he soon succeeded in buying a splendid little Abyssinian pony for himself. But horses in East Africa are a gamble, and may die even if the greatest care is lavished upon them; nothing seems to have much effect on a mule, and as our wild meeting in London had merely left me speechless as a visionary slayer of beasts, he bought one

24 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

of these for me. The first one soon developed a bad back, but a second we had sent to Kijabé was a perfectly tireless animal; it was very small, and seemed to disappear from view under me, but it carried me all day, and was just as full of its unconquerable devil at the end as it had been at the beginning.

Their purchases completed, and their men signed on, my two friends got off from Nairobi, after a good deal of inevitable confusion, delay, and annoyance, and took their way to Kijabé, three stations further up the Uganda Railway, and it was for this unknown bourne that I launched myself trustfully about a week later.

CHAPTER II

LION AND LESSER MATTERS

Some legal problems and a sequel—Camp by the rugged rocks
—At the lioness's meal and after—Ghostly shapes in the
moonlight—The importance of a few feet of jungle—The
third lion—Ill-timed coughing—Flash-light and trick-diving
—The arrogant Somali—In the crater—Hermes appears
—Zim and Tang, "lion-dogs"—The advantages of rain.

ON reaching Kijabé about four o'clock in the afternoon, I confidently expected to find my friends encamped within easy reach of the station; instead of that, a loose-limbed settler strolled up casually and gave me a note. I had thought my long journey within an hour at most of its end, and it was with feelings of some dismay that I learnt that camp was twenty-six miles away. I was further warned to start very early the next morning so as to get in before dark, as there were many lions about; it was altogether a most reassuring communication. Fortunately at this point J. C. walked in, and I surrendered myself thankfully to his guidance. We spent a wretchedly uncomfortable night in the station waiting-room, as is

usual, fitting our own bedding in as best we could, and were up soon after daybreak.

Before we could start, however, several problems needed settlement. My companions had originally planned only to go into the Kedong Valley for the few days before I joined them; but the spot seemed so promising for lion that we in fact stayed ten days in the one camp, a gentle easing into the novelty of it all for which I could not be too thankful. For this short stay, however, they had only taken with them about half the porters, and the remainder, finding time hang heavy on their hands as they waited at Kijabé, had been causing trouble in the neighbourhood. Two had used their leisure to steal some sheep from my loose-limbed acquaintance: they had been caught and fastened together, but had managed to escape and run nine miles by night in a three-legged race along a native path before they were recaptured. It seemed rather hard that their punishment should have been doubled for such unenviable athleticism. My companions had had a matter of rather a different kind to keep them occupied while they were at Kijabé a few days before, but the honour of the tale belongs to C., and I will give it, as nearly as possible, in his own words:—

“Having provided our porters,” he said, “with food and necessities, as I thought

rather liberally, I was rather surprised to see four of their leaders line up in front of me with some grievance. Neither their nor my knowledge of Swahili was great, and all that I could understand was that some one had been imposing on them. I told them to take me to him, and with no hesitation they brought me to a most villainous-looking savage who was employed by the Railway. He had, it seemed, been stealing their food under cover of pretended authority. I tried to get at the rights of the case, but with very little success, and so I told him to come to our *neopara* (headman), who, though he knew little English, would be better than no interpreter. The fellow became insolent, and I was obliged to catch him in a very simple *ju-jitsu* hold that, I'm afraid, caused him considerable pain and bring him over to camp. Here our *neopara* (a Swahili, named Saa) questioned both him and the plaintiffs quite dispassionately, and, having decided the case for the latter, deliberately struck the defendant squarely in the face. The defendant retorted by splitting the court's ear and the side of his head with a heavy stick, upon which the court 'swung right to jaw' and sprained his thumb (a great annoyance later, for he was a good gunboy). After that there was some very pretty in-

fighting, in which the defendant splintered his stick across the court's head, and then, as it was getting serious, I called '*Bass*' (enough) and both men stopped."

"The Hindu station-master now showed the true character of the *babu*. He rushed to me, panting, and cried, "Who pay if this man sick?" The fellow was not hurt beyond two eyes which were black any way, and, as his wages were about 2½d. per day, the loss to the Railway would be less than 6d. I told the *babu* to go to the station or the devil, as he found convenient, and without more ado he went to the station with the consciousness of duty well done, to record the whole affair in his laboriously kept books. But the affair was not quite at an end. That night, as I returned from the Hindu stores, with Saa walking just ahead of me, our friend of the afternoon jumped from behind a tree and struck Saa with a Nandi *rungu* (light warclub). The thing made me angry, and I jumped for him; the fellow whirled back his club to strike, but I was too quick for him and caught it behind his neck and threw him across my hip. I did not strike him or let Saa, for he was not entirely in the wrong, according to his lights, that is, but I still have the *rungu*."

Kijabé is a very lovely spot, with the pre-

cipitous hill of the Escarpment on the one side and the great Rift Valley, of which the Kedong is just a part, stretching away below on the other; in the middle distance rise the two volcanoes of Suswa and Langanot, and out in the plain between them runs the ancient Sotik road. It was along this, midway to the Mau Escarpment, which showed a blue haze on the horizon, that camp was pitched by the rugged rocks where J. C. had seen lions on his first trip. This was the beginning of July, and the plain across which he and I now set forth was just a vast, dry and yellow expanse. I began to realise into what a new world of easy strength and freedom I was stepping about one o'clock. J. C. had been up before me, and neither of us had had any food for a considerable number of hours; tentatively I suggested a halt for lunch; the plain seemed to stretch out limitless before us, but he rejoined with such nonchalance, "Oh, it's not much further," that I was shamed into silence. I heard with a consternation that took some concealing that J. C. was by no means sure that camp had not been moved since he had left the previous day, and it was three o'clock before we sighted the white dots of the tents nestling in the brushwood at the foot of the rocks and looking out across the plain.

C. came out from them, a perfectly amazing contrast to the hurrying friend in London of a month ago, and beaming with triumph, for already he had killed a lioness. He had worked pretty hard too, in spite of the short time since camp had been established here. People had said that there was no water for miles, and that the lions drank at the Anderobo River; but he had been sceptical, and had found water on the slopes of Suswa in jungle-covered "pot holes," which went to prove the lions' home was there after all. The plain stretched right up to the mountain, which rose in lava ridges covered with low scrub and cut by deep dongas filled with dense jungle, and there were undoubtedly several lions about. At first he had hoped to get a sight of them at dusk or dawn, as they went to or returned from hunting on the plain, but they left cover too late and returned too early. So he had tried driving the dongas, and in the meantime had placed a dead zebra at the mouth of a large ravine. Twice a lion had broken cover, but each time on the opposite side from him instead of following up the centre as he had hoped. Each time he had tried a shot, but he admitted it had probably been bad judgment to do so. He had stopped driving after that, saying that, just as ducks can be broken up by shooting

where they raft or feed, so might the lions have moved out completely if he had persisted.

The day before I arrived on the scene he had resorted to stalking a dead zebra at daylight and dusk. He had only just put it out, and had not expected anything to come to it so soon ; but as he was out for a canter on the plain at dusk he noticed, to his surprise, that it seemed much smaller, and on looking more closely he saw that a lioness, the colour of the yellow grass, was lying down beside it. This was the first time he had seen one out of a cage ; a bucking mule and a rotten girth had combined to put his shoulder out some days before, and it was in no fit condition then ; and he had no one with him. Personally, at this stage at any rate, I think I should have adopted courtesy towards a lady's meal ; but then it is certain that if a man lets one such chance slip, he may never have another at all. C. rode up to within a reasonable distance and dismounted to shoot, with the bridle on his arm ; but the pony was not fond of lions, and succeeded in spoiling his first two shots, while the lioness looked at him and lashed her tail from side to side, plainly resenting his intrusion. Then, however, she seemed to think better of it and made off slowly, and as she went C., having let the horse go, struck her

right through the body at about 200 yards distance. She disappeared into the brush fringing the plain, and he returned to camp, determined to go in after her next day.

It was this dangerous business which had kept him from coming in himself to meet me. As he said, following a blood trail into places where you cannot see the end of your rifle is a foolish "pitcher and the well," sort of game; but the very men who tell you that, are the men who must do it again if once they have done it, for it gets into a man's blood like strong drink and calls him back, even though he is afraid. In this case, after minutes of the utmost tension, he came on a long, yellow body showing dimly between the stems, and fired instantly, but there was no need, for the lioness had been dead for many hours.

He was not content with telling me of these attempts and their success within an hour of my reaching camp; I had not properly realised that such things were indeed realities and I was in the midst of them, before I was taken off to help him, or rather watch him, build a *boma*, that is, a thorn-ring, in front of which he had laid out a kill. He had already come to the conclusion from the tracks that he was playing against two pairs of lions and possibly a single male, and that these pairs lived each

in one of the two main dongas low down near the plain, and not up in the old crater, as he had at first thought. He had followed the tracks up each of the dongas to the end, and described these as wonderful little places, little box-cañons not more than 15 feet wide, with the jungle meeting above and cool, dark, almost subterranean passages below. Once he saw the pair he was after disappear in the jungle, just as the morning grew grey, and once he saw the splendid face of a wise, old lion looking full at him from the frame of the dark green bushes. The first time he had followed, but the second he knew it was useless, and hence the building of the *boma* and the decision to shoot at night.

The boys sent on to build it, however, had not unduly exerted themselves, and instead of a thick, circular rampart, made of stout branches and covered with thorn-bush, little more had been done than to pull a few bushes loosely round. To wait in such a structure seemed to me simple madness; it was already nearly dusk, and C., after some vituperation and much hasty energy on the part of all assembled, agreed that to rectify it would disturb the ground uselessly, and we returned to camp and busied ourselves with removing thorns from our fingers. The next day I

34 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

betook myself in safety to the open plain, which was fascinating in itself, as it was intersected in every direction by countless game-trails, mostly those of zebra, which showed like little sandy foot-paths through the yellow grass; J. C. went photographing, and C. put his *boma* into shape. At dusk he and Mabruki, his Wakamba¹ gunboy, took up their stations inside it for the night to await the coming of the lions to the kill placed near. I saw them make their preparations; a blanket was laid on the ground to deaden the movement of their feet; a veritable battery of rifles was leant in readiness, and round the ends of each they fastened a piece of black sock in a large knot to show up in the darkness, and at this point I left them.

C. and I were sharing a tent, and he woke me a little after midnight by his return. He had been in the *boma* for about six hours, but had hardly noticed them slipping by; first a couple of jackals fought and tore at the meat, and then a repulsive hyena came to crunch bones that even a lion could not have mastered. Suddenly both jackals and hyena had stolen away, and Mabruki, whose eyes rivalled those

¹ Grammatically the singular should be 'Mkamba; "wa" is the plural prefix, but it is less confusing to English ears to give the best-known form of all native names and avoid these differentiations.

of the animals, pressed his arm to warn him of the dim form coming from the brush. Still silence, and then slowly a shape appeared by the dead zebra. Another followed like a ghost, or rather a ghoul, descending on the dead, but the moon was covered, and a shot was only a chance. The lions purred, and tore great strips of meat from the zebra, and C. said he could distinctly hear the smack of their lips as they ate. An hour passed; there was little chance of their coming nearer, and, as the light was slightly better, he determined to shoot. He rested his heavy double rifle on a limb, and, getting the black blurr at the muzzle against the lion's shape, took slow, deliberate aim, and fired both triggers at once. I suspect he didn't know very much of the immediate future; there was a tremendous flash, and a series of terrific roars from the lion, and C. struck the other side of the *boma* to the dancing of stars, having been kicked right over by the recoil of his old rifle. But the lion did not go far, and it was evident from his deep grunts that he had been hit.

The next morning, my second in camp, was one of the most thrilling of the whole trip. Only a dark blood trail showed where the lion had been, but we found one of the big bullets, flattened and stained, having evidently been torn

36 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

out by the lion's teeth, and the colour of the trail made it seem probable he had been shot through the liver, in which case he could hardly be still alive. The trail led into the bottom of a large donga, where thorn-bush, long grass, and creepers were hopelessly tangled together, and had to be parted at every step. C. absolutely refused to allow J. C., the photographer of the camp, and me to come in with him, and there can be no doubt that in this he showed a fine wisdom ; such a game is a big risk for the most experienced hunter ; the newly joined who play it are simply asking for death. We were posted to stop the lion if it broke cover, and that was exciting enough. C. entered with three tried men, Saa, the Swahili, who was to keep his eyes only on the blood trail, Mabruki, the Wakamba, who was to disregard the trail and look for the lion himself, and Ogunga, a Wakamba, who carried a spare gun. These Wakamba are natural hunters, and well knew the game they were playing ; Ogunga, who was only rated as an ordinary porter, carried his true weapon, his knife, in his teeth.

Presently from the heart of the brush rose that tremendous sound which, once heard, is never forgotten, the deep growl of a wounded lion. C. was in the thickest place of all, his progress being like crawling through cotton



"IT WAS A SPLENDID BEAST"

wool, he said, when it rose just to the right within twenty feet of him. Ogunga dropped the spare rifle and seized his knife; Mabruki and Saa did not move. The lion crashed towards them and stopped, neither visible to the other through the few feet of tangled jungle. Thus they stood, and then C. slowly motioned the men to fall back, and step by step, with eyes glued to the spot where the lion was, they retired. We now fired the gun which went by the name of *Kubwa bunduki* (the great gun), an old 8-bore, in the hope of driving it into a more accessible place, and finally Mabruki's marvellous eyes saw it move. I was posted on the opposite side of the dense patch, and only heard C.'s quick shot and triumphant cry. He had struck it fairly between the eyes, and it sank dead in its tracks. It was a splendid beast, and though its flanks were scarred by innumerable scratches, its great mane had not been thinned out, as is so often the case. We found on examination that the shots of the night had smashed its left forepaw; but for this the chances are it would have sprung at its assailants. The whole episode is no bad illustration of the disadvantages which may always attend shooting from a *boma* at night.

Undeterred, however, C. spent another night

in this same *boma*, and had another lion-hunt. The lions had now grown wary, and, though they were obviously about, for none of the smaller beasts came to the kill, they kept their distance. It was about midnight when two shadowy forms circled the *boma* in absolute silence, and the male quietly took up his stand about 50 yards away. Sometimes he came a little nearer, but always walked back again, purring to himself; then he settled down to wait until the moon should set. Inside the *boma* C. and Mabruki remained in tense and motionless silence, waiting and watching that dim shape which seemed almost to disappear or to grow as the lion's dark head and mane or lighter coloured flanks were towards them. As the moon dropped lower the lion became more uneasy, and, when it reached a cloud just above the horizon and the light was perceptibly diminished, he moved. To C. he did not seem to come nearer, but merely to grow in size, vaguely larger till he knew he could kill him. The great bullet went smashing into his chest and the hunt was over, but the old lion was game; he was charging straight for the *boma* when death overtook him.

By the time, short indeed for such success, that C. had killed these three lions, I was beginning to feel that Kongoni, or Coke's

hartebeest, a tiresome, ubiquitous creature not unlike a cow, and Grant's Gazelle, a most graceful antelope, should give way to more exciting quarry, and so I arose at dawn one morning to stalk a kill for lion. C. very kindly came with me to lend his assistance, if needed, and we had two gunboys with us, who could be absolutely depended upon not to bolt, so that it was not really the hazardous adventure it seemed to me. I am afraid I was not born to be a hunter pure and simple; as we stole forth from camp I was unable to concentrate my thoughts exclusively upon lions and to forget that I was seeing and scenting for the first time that wonder of the world, the African dawn, as it swept gloriously over the hills and unveiled the plain. I had not time for much general observation, however, for we were soon creeping towards the kill. Nothing there! and I was left wondering whether my sensations were those of disappointment or relief; but a camper progresses fast, and when a day or two later I had a similar experience I knew disappointment predominated. The final development was that, as it seemed improbable we should ever again be in such a fine lion district, I was spurred to follow C.'s example and sit up all night in a *boma*.

40 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

No doubt this is fascinating work, if the watchers are rewarded by a sight of those eerie, silent forms, whether they reduce them to dead lion or not; but if they are not so rewarded, it is the most tedious business in the world. The night I chose was fine, or it would have passed beyond endurance. Absolute silence was an essential, and the gunboy with me developed a cough; at regular intervals, just sufficiently long to restore hope into my mind, the gurgling sounds of his efforts at suppression were borne forth from the *boma* into the night. Once in a spell of coughlessness we heard a beast within a few yards of us. We could see nothing, and my gunboy did not increase my feeling of security by whispering "*Faru*" (rhino), for this was a visitor who, if so minded, could have walked through our *boma* as if it had not been there. I reached hastily for my big gun, a twig caught on my coat and snapped, and a heavy galloping sound told us that the beast, whatever it was, had gone; it was far more probably a lion, which makes just such a heavy sound when on the run. At any rate, that was the only excitement of eleven dreary hours, during which there was nothing but the slow, overhead passage of the full moon, the later hours of seemingly unending darkness, and the madden-

ing gurgles of my gunboy. To have sent him back to camp and remained waiting alone was a possible course, but he might easily have been killed on the way, as we had no light with us ; and though I should not have grieved for his death that evening, it is not improbable that he would have refused to go.

It was evident that the lions were learning caution, but before they had quite perfected their lesson, J. C. had a remarkable adventure from the successful *boma*. He had devoted himself almost entirely to flash-light photography, but a number of his cameras had been broken ; lions, and in one case a leopard, had set off the flash, but then attacked the object which had frightened them. He resolved therefore to sit up and set off his cameras himself in the hope of preventing this. He came into camp the next morning with a large bruise on his forehead, and, on our asking its origin, gave the following account of his night. He had waited and watched without result until the moon set, but then a lion and a lioness came down to the kill ; he had touched off the flash, and this was followed by a heavy galloping sound. Assuming very rashly that both beasts had been frightened away, he came out of the *boma* to look at and reset his cameras. He was stooping over one, when

the lion, which had not gone more than a few yards, gave a lucky growl and came for him. He made one dart and dived head-first through the little door left in the side of the *boma* and got in by inches only, landing on his forehead against the other side. It was perhaps as close a call as any one could have.

Lions were, of course, the principal object at this camp by the rugged rocks on the slope of Suswa, but the life was full of many other things, not less interesting—only different. I had hardly reached the camp before I had an amusing illustration both of the character of Somalis and the extent to which a wandering white man can be law-maker. We were just about to set out to see to the building of the first *boma* when a Somali, travelling along the Sotik road with two porters and a number of pack-donkeys, noticed our tents and came to ask us to give him some water. Now water was a scarcity in this camp; it had all to be scooped up from holes in the rock a long distance away, and brought to the camp in tins, and a temporary check was placed upon all unnecessary cleanliness. It was pure generosity to give him any, but we agreed to do so on condition that he either pushed on for a couple of hours at once or remained where he was until daybreak; if he merely went on

a little way, as he proposed to do, he would spoil all chances of lion for that night. To this he agreed, and said he would push on, but in a few minutes he returned to ask us to lend him a porter to carry the water, as his own men were already overloaded. He himself carried nothing but his staff, and at this cool request the amicability of the *shauri*¹ broke down; with some heat he was told to carry the water on his own unburdened back. He drew himself up with stately hauteur, and answered, "Somalis never carry loads," and the upshot was the reverse of what he intended, for he spent the night in our camp, guarded by a trusty askari² armed with a rifle and orders to detain the Somali, his porters and his donkeys, until they received permission to go. The askari could not conceal either his delight at such a task, since all Somalis are loathed by the other natives for their tribal arrogance, or his disappointment that no lions came to feed upon the donkeys in the night.

J. C. and I paid a visit to the crater of

¹ An invaluable word of many meanings,—arrangement, settlement, dispute, conversation, grievance, &c. &c.

² Literally the native soldier or policeman, but on safari he is the man whose job is to keep guard at night and take messages. He carries a gun instead of a load, and generally gives himself airs; as a rule, a pretty useless character.

Suswa Volcano one of these days. We missed the easy way in, and took the ascent nearly perpendicularly, but our exertions were repaid by a magnificent view. Almost sheer below us, down the rugged walls of lava, lay the great horse-shoe basin of the old crater, a little plain by itself, seemingly about two miles across and four miles long, with steam jets rising here and there from clefts in the lava; the abundant game on it looked like pigmy creatures from our height. We clambered down, and finally circled round again to camp by following the game-trail which issues from the narrow neck and descends into the Kedong Valley. We timed our return pretty badly, and had an adventurous hour or so of darkness, which was distinctly creepy in such a lion country.

C. was rude enough to refer to the crater as our stamping ground, but he had a very good day up there himself. After reaching the top, and enjoying the splendid view, he took a young Kavirondo porter named Kiboko, and crossed to a ridge near to try and get a good photograph. Suddenly he heard frantic shouts and saw his gunboys waving their arms wildly, and down the hill like a steam-engine came a rhino and her *mtoto* (baby). It was as unexpected as it would be to find one on the

top of a lamp-post, but thanks to the warning he was a little off the line of her onrush, and crouched behind a bush as she tore past; the only thing that could be seen of Kiboko, who was armed with the camera, was the dust his flying feet were raising. He reappeared, however, after a due interval, breathless but unhurt. C. proceeded into the crater, and was lucky enough to come on a leopard basking on a rock in the sun; he struck it first on the shoulder and then between the eyes, so it had little chance to be nasty. Leopards are such wary beasts that they are seldom shot and still more seldom photographed, and their charge is about the swiftest thing on earth; one has been known to charge, maul three men, and disappear before a shot was fired at it, so the uneventful death of this was matter for congratulation.

Time was passing, and the lions had learnt wisdom; so, after much confused dividing of outfit and real regret, C. and I left J. C., who had to be back in America, still encamped by the rugged rocks, and returned to Kijabé to begin our real safari. It was at Kijabé that we made our luckiest find. A little Kikuyu, by name Oweru, with a face of charm and the figure of a Hermes, came in to camp, asking to be signed on. We promised him a rupee

46 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

as "backsheesh" (it is a word which goes all over the world), if he would go out among his friends and bring in fourteen more Kikuyu willing to be signed on as porters. In a couple of hours he had brought them, and over these recruits of his he was of course *neopara* (head-man). Before many days, though he was about half the size of most of the professional porters, he was the foremost man in camp. He was always being needed for something, either by us or by his fellows; and he left us with the impression that, though most of the Kikuyu are like sheep, one with character and individuality is as good a servant as can be found.

We now tried to get hold of a couple of dogs; our experience with the lions had convinced us how useful they would be, and with the aid of a settler we managed to get two sent on to us. Zim was a big yellow dog, Tang a little black one; the virtues of so many breeds were joined in both that we preferred to call them just "lion-dogs," and very well they served us. Of course they were not intended to tackle dangerous game, only to locate it when wounded; but on one occasion they broke loose near a rhino and puzzled the stupid, great beast terribly. Tang barked around his stern and Zim actually tried



"UP THE UGANDA RAILWAY"



"POSHO" (WOOLRU IN COUNTRY)

to pin him by the nose, so that he was really nonplussed, and wheeled helplessly after first one and then the other.

We were nearly through with our various jobs, when one by one our *pukka* or professional porters—Wanyamwazi, Kavirondo, and Wakamba—came up and asked for an advance of pay. Some record of these advances had to be kept, and, besides, we were anxious to learn the name of every one of our boys. C. asked "*Jina latu nani?*" ("What is your name?"), and then left me to put down in a book their entirely unpronounceable names, with the advance ascribed to the right one. By the time the last of the *pukkas* had received his advance and departed towards the Indian store to make his purchases, we saw that all the Kikuyu, other than Oweru's new recruits, were gathering for a *shauri*. Some complaint was coming; it took the form of demanding that they should have the same *posho* as the *pukka* porters—that is, finely ground meal—though their regular food is an allowance of Kikuyu beans, which are a good deal cheaper than the others' *posho*. We met them with a compromise; we said we would give them half *posho* and half Kikuyu beans. They still demurred, and said they would leave us and return across the hills, to 'Njabini, their home, from which a

48 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

friend had recruited them for us. It was obvious that if we granted this request, it would be merely the forerunner of many, and that we should always be having trouble with them ; a telegram to an agent in Nairobi would procure us as many professional porters as we needed to replace them, so that, even if they deserted, we should not be stranded. We told them we would give them no more, and ordered them to pass in the blankets they had received from us as part of their wages. This order took them completely aback ; it is one of the failings of the native that he thinks no one can do without him, and presumes on that thought. They hesitated and conferred, but the deciding argument was the rain ; it happened to be pouring, and instead of passing in their blankets, they huddled the closer in them, and in a few minutes announced that they were contented and would go on with us.

Next day at mid-day we entrained into a goods train with all our men, loads, my companion's horse and my mule, and were encamped at Gilgil, two stations further up the line, before nightfall.

CHAPTER III

NORTH-EAST FROM GILGIL

A straying mail—Early marches—Under the Aberdares—Olbolossat—A first sight of Kenia—Gluttony and ear-tearing—The Somali's cousin—Abdulla's pursuit of boots—Kilangosi, the Masai—Elephants as garden-manure—Rhino on the plain—Asmanie deserts—Two Tommy—A kinless beast—At the junction of the rivers.

BEFORE we started we had an illuminating example of the vagaries of the East African postal service. A boy from one of the farms in the Kedong Valley called at Kijabé for his Bwana's letters, and the Indian postmaster, knowing that we were encamped somewhere in that region, had given him our letters as well, with a touching but disturbing faith in their reaching us eventually by some means. He thought us officious to require them at his hands when we came in; he had shifted the responsibility, delivered them in fact, and that he had delivered them to the wrong person was our affair, not his. There were one or two of some importance expected, so we despatched one of our most trustworthy boys

50 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

after the irresponsible messenger, and finally were lucky enough to retrieve them. After that we sent word to the agent in Nairobi, to whom our letters were addressed, to forward nothing more.

A stationary camp is very pleasant in many ways, but one misses a great deal unless one is constantly on the move. Probably the most perfect way to enjoy life on safari is to be two or three days in a camp, and then move on again, for one of the greatest charms of the country through which we went was its unfailing variety. A day's march usually took us into country of an entirely different character. The first stage north-east from Gilgil along the route to Laikipia Boma or Rumuruti (the latter is the official name) seems more like the Scottish Highlands than Africa : it really bears a close resemblance to the beautiful country along the banks of the Awe. Later on the day's marchings lose their novelty : the eye becomes accustomed to the long snake-like line of the safari winding its way along either across the plain or following a mountain-track ; the crossings of the little streams lose much of their fascination, yet even so it is never wearisome, and at first it is like nothing in the world. Later on, too, we were accustomed to divide, C. ranging in a big semicircle on one



"THE LONG SNAKE LIKE LINE OF THE SAMAKI"



"THE CROSSINGS OF THE LITTLE STREAMS"

side of the line of march, and I on the other ; but starting out at daybreak from Gilgil, we rode together at the head of the procession, and were content with passing through the glorious country. That first evening, though, was not very successful ; we had taken little tinned food of any sort, and our supply of meat was low. The cook was completely disorganised by the change from a stationary camp, and in addition the rain came down in torrents. It rained every day for the first week out from Gilgil, and then we never had another drop for a couple of months.

We were following the direct route to Rumuruti, but my companion was most anxious to secure at this stage the two elephants he hoped to shoot, for in British East Africa elephants are at best a hoped-for possibility, never a certainty, and the man who misses one chance may not get another at all. We knew of the herd that range between Solai and Naivasha, and we now swung away to the right, and camped the second night at the foot of the Aberdare Mountains, after a hard march through the swampy plain. Elephant-tracks were numerous, rather as if some one had sunk a long succession of buckets in the marsh, and here we met a returning hunter, who with unusual kindness, after having been out nearly

52 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

twelve hours himself, came over to our camp to give us all the information he possessed. Acting upon his advice, we moved up the gorge towards the forest, and camped in the direction of Mt. Kippiperi. We were fortunate enough to secure in this neighbourhood fair specimens of that beautiful and shy antelope, the bushbuck, which lives in the coverts along the slopes of the Aberdares and only comes out at dawn and dusk, and also some Colobus monkeys, which live in the tops of the biggest trees in the forest.

The day on which we moved towards Kippiperi was intended by us, after several tiring days, to be more or less a rest-day: it turned out to be far from this. We rode on ahead together with our boys, a lovely ride with the Aberdares on our left, and chose the spot for our camp; but hardly had we done so before we saw a band of waterbuck, as the crow flies, only about 600 yards away. It was the first time we had seen these animals, and we decided to stalk them, but, though they were so near for a crow, they were a good two hours from us, for they were on the other side of a cañon, which must have been nearly 900 feet deep, and was almost sheer into the bargain: so narrow was it that at a little distance it seemed to be only a thin

belt of trees. The going was easier than the returning, for we made a bad choice, owing to the thickness of the foliage, of a place to climb back, and had laboriously to crawl bit by bit up slipping sand and over precipitous rock, dripping with perspiration, and reminding each other from time to time that this was our "off-day"; how the porters despatched to bring in the waterbuck fared I do not know, but they arrived successfully.

This camp was the most strikingly beautiful of any on the whole safari. Behind us stretched the line of the Aberdare Range, its sides deeply wooded and its crest usually mist-crowned; in front, beyond the thin belt concealing the cañon, were rolling hills leading up to Mt. Kippiperi; on our left was the great forest, full of mighty, leafless trunks, cedars for the most part, and far down on our right lay the huge, marshy plain, with Olbolossat Swamp a glimmering speck in the extreme distance. It was indeed a place worthy to be the home of the elephant.

Unfortunately for us, however, the elephants had been recently disturbed, and several days of tracking convinced us that they had moved too far south to make it worth following them. We shot a few more Colobus monkeys, using a 25.20 rifle or a shot-gun in a manner

that was rather suggestive of rook-shooting—only I felt a certain remorse for killing an animal so beautiful and with such an air of humanity about it—and then moved down to Olbolossat Swamp. The march there provided us with a curious contrast; we had only just finished shooting some snipe in a boggy piece, when a boy came running back from the safari to report "*Faru*" (rhino). It was my first sight of one, and we approached within 100 yards of it on the plain, but decided its horn was too small to make it worth shooting. We were of course to leeward of it, and it could not get our wind, but it was much troubled, especially at the sound of a good shot C. made at a cervical cat. The sudden change from snipe to rhino struck us as rather ludicrous.

Olbolossat—this seems to be the present spelling, but no two people, not even on maps, spell a name alike in East Africa—has often been described, and, indeed, it is a place of singular beauty. We camped some way above, on the slopes of the Aberdares, to lessen the risk of fever, and could look right over what may perhaps best be called an island-dotted mere, beyond which was the plain and in the further distance hills. We looked out for hippo, but saw no signs of any, and I devoted



“THROUGH A VAST ENGLISH PARK



RUMURUTI

myself to trying to vary our diet with a shot-gun. With a collapsible boat grand sport could be obtained, but, having none, I waded up to my waist and stood motionless in the reeds, while several of our boys beat and shouted along the edges of the swamp. Ducks are there in thousands, and enough came wheeling over me to reward me for my wetting with some capital shots.

We made a mistake in our next march ; had we known more, we should have gone past Olbolossat and round to Rumuruti by the Thomson Falls, where there is a good chance of meeting with buffalo. Instead, we struck directly across the Aberdares. The loss was not entire, for the plateau is magnificent : swamp and plain give way, and it is exactly like riding through a vast English park studded at great distances with large clumps of trees. We had been told that, if we camped on the top of the Aberdares with Kikuyu porters, several would die in the night ; for, though the line of the equator actually runs through Olbolossat Swamp, it can be very cold at this altitude. These porters cannot stand cold, and, if they take it into their heads to die, do it with surprising agility. We had not meant to risk this, but were deceived as to distance, and did in fact camp on the very top of the plateau ;

however, we saw to it that they built good fires, C. getting up in the night on a personal tour of inspection, and none suffered.

The reward of ignorance came at dawn. Ever since reading, as a school-boy, Rider Haggard's description in *Allan Quatermain*, where he makes the old Zulu say, "A man might look thereon for a thousand years and yet be hungry to see"—not that the actual natives seem to have any eye for natural beauty—I had yearned to see Mt. Kenia. Coming out of our tent at dawn on this, the first day of August, I saw her a hundred miles away on our north-east flank, reaching up a glorious grey shadow to the sky. She is a mountain, mystical, elusive and wondrously beautiful; apart from the grandeur of her mighty, snow-clad peak, which rises up from the vast belts of almost impenetrable forest, she has what can only be described as a fascinating shyness.

Like most African mountains, she is veiled in clouds throughout the day, and is seen in her glory at dawn and dusk alone: often she remains brooding among her clouds for days together. I was early this divine morning, and watched her changing like an opal as the first rays of the still-hidden sun flushed her fields of snow and the mists rose slowly up, like a bridal veil, and hid her from the day. She stands in

solitary grandeur, a majestic, lonely mountain, and no one can look upon her and not feel his imagination moved at the thought of all that she has seen ; around her, ceaseless raidings and bloodshed through the immemorial ages of African darkness, the elephant in undisturbed possession of her forests, along her base the gangs of slaves, the caravans of Arab traders, then the first explorers, and now over all the hand of British rule.

Out of thy clouds which wrap thee, like the love about
a maiden

Tenderly, softly sheltered from the world,

Out of thy heaven's rare blue,

First pearl of the dawn, last rose of the twilight,

Keep thy majestic and eternal ward.

Over thy land, from which the clouds are lifting,
slowly lifting,

Over thy children, who have passed along

On an unremembered trail ;

Out of the enfolding forests of the ages,

Keep thy majestic and eternal ward.

We saw her again as she came forth to bathe in the dying sunlight, a vision in which tenderness and grandeur blended in a rare harmony, and then, except for an unexpected view on the road next day, she was lost to us until we were turning back from Meru a month later.

Our attention was now directed to matters of a sterner kind than the contemplation of natural beauty. My companion had shot two zebra right on the line of the safari's march; the men had had little meat for some days, and these were surrendered to them. I was not present, but the scene was described to me as cannibalistic. The porters are exceptionally fond of zebra; they seem to find a piquancy about its coarse flavour, and now they tore at the carcasses, each struggling to secure the best pieces. C. gave one zebra over to the *pukka* porters, the other to the Kikuyu; but the Kikuyu are men of small build, and one huge Kavirondo, already noticed as an old hand at skulking, left his fellows and tried to oust the Kikuyu. Savagery was uppermost, and he disregarded the order to go to his own beast, and tried to remain until he received the butt-end of a rifle in the place where he was intending later to secrete his portions of the zebra. This flagrant act of disobedience could not be passed over, and in the evening, after camp had been pitched, the man was called up; his offence was fully explained to him, and he was then punished in the usual way. We found that there was very little need of any punishment as long as the men saw that we were trying to be just as well as firm, though a

further necessity arose in odd fashion the very next morning.

On coming out of our tent we found the Kikuyu clustering silently round the embers of our fire: we were beginning to know the idiosyncrasies of the various tribes by now, and recognised the signs of a grievance. We called on the Kikuyu *neopara* (headman) to tell us what was the matter; he said that early that morning a big Kavirondo we had promoted to be an askari had ordered a Kikuyu to fetch water for our use. The Kikuyu had refused, and made a dive into his porter's little tent, whereupon the Kavirondo had grabbed him by the pendant lobe of his ear and torn the loop. Now it must be explained that in this land of single garments an ear is an asset; it is in fact one of a Kikuyu's most useful possessions, and serves a purpose exactly similar to the little bags carried by English ladies, whose dresses are free from the ungainliness of pockets. The lobe is stretched to an immense size, and in it its owner can carry tins several inches round; moreover, a torn lobe is considered a disgrace, and so the Kikuyu had come in a body to demand satisfaction, and, failing to receive it, would leave us then and there. It was clear that the tearing was no mere accident: the Kavirondo,

though the best and hardest worker in camp, was a man of brutal strength ; here, in trying to enforce obedience, he had exceeded proper means. The judgment passed by the president of the court of inquiry seemed eminently just—at any rate it satisfied all parties, even the principals ; we punished the askari for brutality and the Kikuyu for disobedience. The body of Kikuyu moved off perfectly content and then my companion sewed up the torn ear, a delicate and painful process. The little Kikuyu stood without moving a muscle during the operation, and then fainted, showing his courage was that of stoicism, not insensibility. It is satisfactory to record that the surgery was so successful that before the end of the safari his ear was as good a pocket as ever.

All this delayed our start ; we had breakfast, and then, after a slight re-arrangement of loads to relieve the victim, we marched into Rumuruti, on the way shooting some Tommy, as this is one of the best localities for specimens with good horns. There was a great deal to be done in the day and a half we remained at Rumuruti. We had diminished our loads by sending back some trophies and various articles, now seen to be merely burdensome, through an Indian we had met travelling

into Gilgil with a few boys and a number of pack-donkeys. Meru, the next government post to which we meant to come, is a long way from Rumuruti, and we wished to be able to linger wherever game abounded.

One of the most difficult parts of running a safari is to manage the food-supply satisfactorily. The sportsman needs such things as rice, onions, potatoes, flour, sugar, and butter to last him to the next store; the men need *posho* and Kikuyu beans, the animals need crushed Mahindi corn. All these require calculating, but the food for the men is by far the most important. To them meat is just a coveted accessory to their one staple article of food, and, unless care is taken, a safari may find itself out of *posho* and many days from the next place of purchase, or else compelled to hurry on from a place where it is desired to stop and hunt. Some safaris carry round with them the entire food for the trip; but this is as unnecessary as for the sportsman to bring out quantities of tinned food from home. We found out as nearly as we could the number of days to the next store, made a rough guess at the number of days we were likely to want to linger, and then took supplies for several more as a margin. Here in Rumuruti we engaged half-a-dozen more

62 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

porters, and loaded every ounce on to our men we could. Of course, though trophies increased, these loads diminished. As a rough basis for calculation, we found that the men ate two loads of 60 lb. each a day, and, though the fable of Æsop and the bread is unknown to the East African native, the men knew the food was for them, and cheerfully put up with a heavier load than usual on leaving the post.

In buying *posho* here, we met an old trick in a form then unknown to us. Our Somali gunboy, who was acting as headman, came up and said there were two stores in Rumuruti, one run by an Indian, the other by a Somali; the latter, it appeared, was his cousin, and he asked us to favour him with our custom rather than the Indian. We did so, and by the light of later wisdom found his prices absurdly high; afterwards we asked the price at each store, and dealt with the one which gave us best value for our money, and, though our Somali came of a populous family and had a cousin at every subsequent post, we were not taken in again, and, finally, towards the end, he laughed when we came to a post and asked if he had a cousin there too. It seems that in one form or another the commission business goes all over the world.

Then my Abdulla wanted boots. Now it is part of the wages of a gunboy that he should be started with a new suit of clothes, and, above all, with boots. Why he should covet the hard, uncomfortable things which are sold as gunboy's boots, it is impossible to imagine, unless it be as a mark of his superior status. For this reason, I suppose, Kiboko invariably strutted about in a heavy cartridge-belt. At any rate Abdulla, having been promoted from a porter, felt that he ought to have boots, and consequently he had been putting in his claim to boots for some days past with a gentle steadiness that makes surely for success. We pointed out to him that he had signed on as a porter, and could always resume that useful occupation, whereupon with a sigh he abandoned argument and took to strategy.

Did I want him to keep close to me with a second gun? Oh, but the thorns were bad where I went, and, if he only had boots, he would be so much better able to creep after me; his acting was of a distinguished order as partly by signs and partly by speech he conveyed this information. At last by an odd coincidence he became afflicted with a lameness; surely I would give him boots now: there was really no other remedy. He showed far more intelligent persistence in his pursuit

of boots than he ever had after game; but he had served me well, and so after Rumuruti he clattered proudly along, making far more noise in his new possessions, especially after they split, than he had ever been able to achieve before; it was the end of his utility, and he had finally to be converted into an askari.

This great affair having been brought to a satisfactory termination as far as Abdulla was concerned, we could attend to our own requirements again. Up to this point Mabruki had been our informant as to the route, and many porters also knew the way, but now we were going beyond their region of certainty and needed a guide who could give us accurate information as to the water-holes and streams, as well as to the locality of game. The District Commissioner, whose sister has made at Rumuruti one of the most beautiful gardens in Africa, was away, but the then A.D.C., Mr. Adams, showed us such courtesy as later we received also from almost every government official with whom we came in contact. Perhaps his most welcome kindness was a gift of vegetables, which are sadly missed on safari. He helped us, too, to get a guide, and in Kilangosi, the Masai, he found us not merely a guide upon whose knowledge and accuracy

we could absolutely depend, but also a most perfect and polished gentleman.

In Africa people are annoyingly vague about time and distance, but if Kilangosi said the next water was a six-hour march away, it was six hours, and not anything from three to ten, as it would have meant to our other boys. He used to walk at the head of the safari, carrying his long spear, clad in his rich, red blanket, made of wool and not as the ordinary ones of cotton, and moving along with the tireless step of his tribe hour after hour the same dignified, striking figure; and we came to look forward with pleasure to his quiet "*Soba*" (Masai, "Greeting") as he drew near to our log-fire after dinner to discuss the morrow's march.

A slight matter for further settlement among the Kikuyu arose before we could proceed on our journey. Oweru, the charming little recruiter of Kijabé, the only man in camp with whom Kilangosi really unbent and became friends, had already proved himself so efficient that we now made him *neopara* not only, as he was then, over his Kijabé recruits, but also over the more numerous Kikuyu from 'Njabini. Their *neopara* was so only by right of birth, and was a mild and incompetent man, but naturally enough he resented his deposition, since as porter he would have to carry a

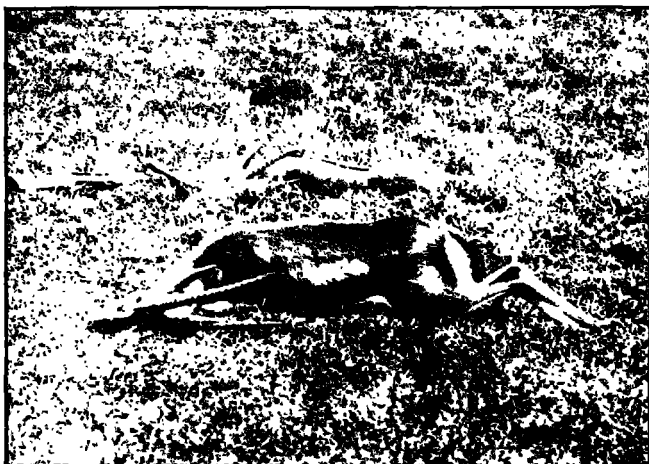
load and as *neopara* he did not, and threatened to take off all those who had come with him. We took no part in these internal politics; we had invested Oweru with office, and we left it to him to justify our faith in his individuality by securing a majority in the Kikuyu parliament: there was a long *shauri*, and then our little fellow came quietly to tell us that they were all coming on under his leadership.

The only interruption to all these arrangements and purchases was an unsuccessful afternoon after a hippo which had been damaging the *shambas* (farms). It was ensconced somewhere in the reeds, but no beating produced it. Rumuruti seems a sporting station; not long ago the askaris turned out at night in a body to shoot some invading elephants, and actually killed two in Miss Collier's garden, while a friend of C.'s shot three there a year or two ago, and another party five at the same time; the comments of the Commissioner on eight unburied elephants close to his house have not been recorded. Unluckily there were no elephants near now, and we had no chance to offend in the same way.

We had a first sight of impala soon after leaving Rumuruti, but failed to stalk them successfully. In East Africa there is probably a greater abundance and variety of



"A FAIRLY GOOD HORN"



"ANOTHER TOMMY . . . FELL DEAD TOO"

game than in any other part of the world, and some animals are found nowhere else; but, generally speaking, it is true that, to obtain the finest specimens of the different species, the sportsman would have to go first to one part of Africa and then to another, seeking each in its favourite locality. This, however, is not so with impala: all the best impala heads come from East Africa, and a very beautiful trophy the head makes with its lyre-shaped horns.

We were now following the course of the Guaso Nerok towards its junction with the Guaso Nyiro, and had not proceeded far before a boy ran back from the safari to tell us two rhino were blocking its advance. We cantered up, and saw the two great beasts slumbering on the track about 300 yards ahead; one of them had a fairly good horn, and it was decided that I was to try a shot. It was all so ridiculously easy, that I formed a very erroneous opinion of the dangers of rhino; in like manner I have heard of men going out and finding a lion who let himself be killed like a sheep, and coming back to say there was nothing in lion-shooting. We approached within about 120 yards; the two beasts got on to their feet and peered suspiciously about, and, as there were two and no further cover, I shot at that range at the

one with the larger horn. I happened to shoot straight; his knees seem to give as the dust flew in a little puff from the point of his shoulder, and then he started off, ran 400 yards, stopped, stood, and rolled over dead. The other, though greatly excited by the sound of the shot, made off, and that was really all. Shooting on a plain when one sees the rhino first is a vastly different thing from blundering on to the top of him in bush or long grass, as every one discovers at some time or other.

Later in the afternoon I saw a most amusing scene with another rhino as chief performer. The safari had gone on and made camp, from which men were despatched to the dead beast, while C. and I took divergent courses. He shot a waterbuck and I a Tommy, and, as I was nearing camp, I saw another rhino—they seem to be numerous on this Laikipia plateau. It was some way to my left, and, not wishing to shoot, I made a circuit, but apparently disturbed it, for it made off from me diagonally. About a mile ahead were the tents of camp, and it headed straight for them. Presently some one in camp saw it, and then everybody turned out like a swarming hive, and I could hear the shouts and see arms wildly waving as the men tried to prevent the stupid, puzzled beast from charging straight through.

It veered off in a semicircle, like a skittish horse, evidently trying to make out what was up, but finally departed without doing any damage.

The next amusement was that Asmanie, the cook, tried to desert in the night, but was followed and brought back by the Somali. It was just an unreasoning act of pique, for without a paper showing he had been properly paid off he would have been liable to be stopped and arrested at any moment; the regulations about vagrant natives are strict. Asmanie was certainly a vile cook, but on the whole a cheery fellow, though he had these momentary fits of annoyance at being abused. It was on this occasion, I think, that my companion, having let loose on him with his tongue for a very bad dinner served very late, returned saying, "D'you know, that man almost makes me angry." Promptness is more than fine cooking on safari; if the cook is slow, one cannot get started early and one cannot get to bed early, both points of the greatest importance in the success of hunting. However, the next day the tent-boy we had left with J. C. rejoined us, and, discovering that each could do the work of the other, in spite of their protests we changed the two round and did better, for Amisi, the original tent-boy, was shrewd enough to see that the quicker he got us our meals, the

70 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

sooner he would be at liberty to resume his interrupted occupation of card-playing.

We saw in this neighbourhood fine water-buck, Grant and Tommy, but none of the rarer species of game. Just now I did a thing which may be common enough, but which struck me as extraordinary, and certainly impressed Abdulla with great respect for his Bwana's shooting powers. Of course one's boys, just like European servants, brag to each other about their individual masters, and I overheard the story with additions in the evening as it started on its round through the camp. I fired with a .405 Winchester at a good Tommy, which was lying down 130 yards away. The bullet struck it on the shoulder, and it just rolled over and died, and another Tommy, which had been lying unseen beside it, staggered to its feet, walked a few yards, and fell dead too. The odd thing was not so much the piercing of the two animals as that both should have been killed almost instantly; but the wound on the second, made by the flattened soft-nose bullet, was a terrible one, tearing away on its outward course the greater part of the shoulder. I have heard since that this double shot is more common with Tommy than with any other animal, owing to their habit of lying down close to



"PAST THE GREAT GRANITE KOPJES"



ORYX BEISA

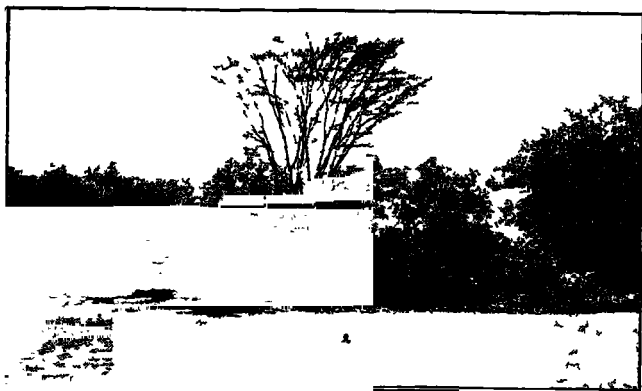
one another. In a similar way two partridges are not infrequently killed by a single shot, two pheasants hardly ever.

Our next move along the Guaso Nerok brought us out of the fine plain into a region of barren, stunted scrub, interspersed with rocks. Here I saw a horrible proof of animal kinlessness. I strolled out while camp was being pitched at dusk after an afternoon march, and came on two jackals devouring the remains of a carcase. I wounded one mortally, and was advancing to it, when the second, which had been frightened away for a moment by the shot, returned, and tore at the throat of its dying companion. I fired again, and struck the brute hard, but it escaped in the gloom among the scrub. It is detestable to wound and fail to find any animal, but in this case I confess to feeling little compunction.

Two further days, during which we shot some of the big guinea-fowl, whose scurrying alarm is a great hindrance at times to successful stalking, and also a blue dik-dik, a beautiful little antelope about the size of a hare, brought us through the "wait-a-bit" thorn-trees and scrubland, past the great granite kopjes, to a place of great cactus-trees and a kind of grass that grows like a sheaf of spears; and then on, along a track between dense thorn,

to the junction of the Guaso Nerok and Guaso Nyiro. The thorns are worthy of respect at all times, but to appreciate them properly it is necessary to be seated on a mule which has just one idea in his head, and that is to make a straight, forcible bolt for where he thinks one's companion's horse is.

In this neighbourhood the lesser kudu, an antelope kindred to the bushbuck, with fine, twisted horns, is to be found, but we saw no tracks and never obtained this prize. At the junction of the rivers we had to sit down and wait for many hours until we could ford the Guaso Nyiro without the risk of losing some loads or wetting our trophies. Our headman, who had certainly no trace of the coward about him, disregarded the probability of crocodiles entirely, and crossed at intervals to test the depth of the water. Rain on the days preceding had raised the river several feet, but it fell with great rapidity, and meanwhile many of our boys took the opportunity of having a long, splashing, noisy bath. We never saw a crocodile the whole time we were out, but in any case numbers and a noise are supposed to insure immunity. We had reached the junction about eleven o'clock in the morning, and an hour before dark we crossed easily into the finest game-country in the world.



"OUR HEADMAN . . . CROSSED AT INTERVALS"



"WE CROSSED EASILY "

CHAPTER IV

ON THE GUASO NYIRO

Hungry Wanderobo—Giraffe and gerenuk—*Fras's* escapade
—The helmet and the thorn-tree—A tribal disagreement—
Waking the python—A sudden apparition—"Forcing food
from the police"—At the Isiolo.

THE Guaso Nyiro is one of the many streams which take their rise on the far-flung slopes of Kenia. All the maps of this country have much vagueness, for a regular survey is far too expensive to be applied to any but those parts which have been populously settled: in most its early course is only indicated roughly by a dotted line, but it is clear that, starting from Kenia, it flows in a northerly direction until it joins the Guaso Nerok, continues north awhile, and then turns in a great loop eastwards towards Jubaland and the coast until it loses itself in the Lorian Swamp. Inside this loop is the home of an immense abundance and variety of game.

The country just across the junction of the two rivers develops almost at once into great rolling plain, broken up here and there with

74 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

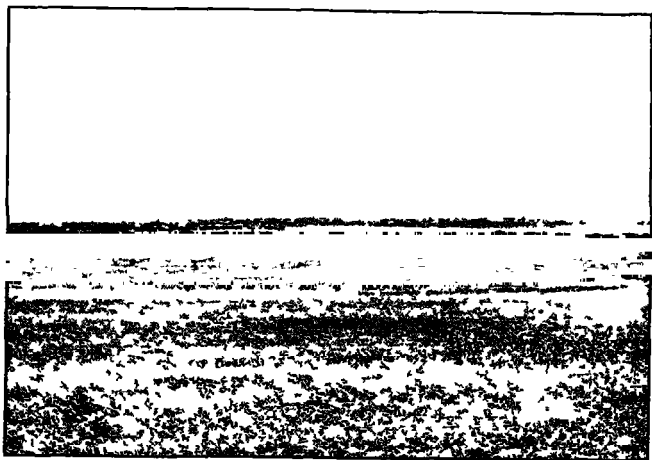
clumps of trees, and further on by stony kopjes; as far as I could gather from those who had also been in South Africa, the plainlands of East Africa bear a close resemblance to the South African veldt. It seemed here to be devoid of all human life, and we went for several days without meeting a soul, though we had proof that our movements were watched by that strange, wild folk, the Wanderobo. Many of these, the people who live by hunting and are excessively poor, are really outcasts from other definite tribes; but there are some who are as they have always been, and as their fathers were before them. They are scattered all over the country, and are very shy of approach, living their unfettered life in their own savage way, dwellers in the bush or in holes in the rocks, and killing the game on which they subsist by means of ingenious traps or by stealth with poisoned arrows. It is hardly possible for a wandering visitor to succeed in winning the confidence of these, though he may get into touch with some who have become tribeless hunters, but they are near him all the same.

I had shot an oryx one day some miles from camp, when I had only a gunboy and my syce with me. I could take no more than the head and a small portion of the meat, so on

getting in I sent out some porters for the rest. They returned, saying it had all been taken, and Mabruki went through a most amusing pantomime, describing with action how, as soon as a safari entered the country, the Wanderobo gathered and silently dogged the hunting. He explained how, at the time I was shooting the oryx, half-a-dozen would have been peering over the edge of a distant hill, watching the *Bwana piga* (the master shoot). As soon as our backs were turned, down they had evidently come, and made free with the booty. Obviously it was far easier to follow a clumsy white man and let him shoot the game, than to stalk it laboriously themselves with their puny weapons. The little incident revealed how much goes on of which the visitor, bent only on his hunting, has no idea.

The amazing wealth of game can be best illustrated by giving a summary of the number seen on a single morning. I had hardly left camp before I came on a bunch of eland; a sportsman's licence allows only one bull of this, the largest of all the antelopes, which is estimated to weigh as much as 2,000 lb., though that must be exceptional, and in this bunch there were only cows, so they were allowed to graze in peace. It is, incidentally,

an astoundingly irritating habit of the females to protrude themselves upon one; for instance, when we were after waterbuck later, we came on cows again and again, but never a bull; and the same with impala—the hornless females seemed to parade their useless heads on purpose to annoy one. Shortly after seeing the eland, I saw among some trees about twenty giraffe; a special licence costing 75 rupees (£5) must be taken out to shoot a single bull, but who wants a giraffe? I have heard of a man covering a set of dining-room chairs with the skin of one, but he probably had an enemy who was getting married. The only other thing to do with one, except to present it to a museum, is to buy a baronial hall, but unless one can do this, it seems a shame to kill one of these fascinating creatures. They belong to a bygone era, and should be immune from molestation in their out-of-place weirdness to-day. I took my camera, and tried to stalk them, but when I was within about sixty yards off away they went in their ungainly see-saw gallop, their tails swinging and their necks swaying backwards and forwards, for all the world as if they were using them to row themselves along; there cannot be many sights in the world as quaint as the sight of giraffe in motion.



"IN THEIR UNCAINLY, SEESAW CALLOI"



"A CALF, OLD ENOUGH TO FIND FOR ITSELF"

[See page 78]

As I went on I saw Grant, Tommy, zebra, and oryx in great herds: there must have been hundreds, almost thousands, there altogether; and then Mabruki, who happened to be with me for once instead of with my companion, stopped, and, pointing to a speck showing a mile away against a hill, said, "Gerenuk." I should have called any one else a liar if he had told me he could distinguish species at that distance, but Mabruki was quite right. The gerenuk is one of the strangest animals in the world. It is extraordinarily local; it is found just here, in Somaliland where its horns are longer, and in hardly any other place in the world. It is more like a giraffe in miniature than anything else, for it has an unusually long and slender neck and browses on trees, resting its forefeet upon the trunks; yet this is hardly a fair parallel, for it is exceedingly graceful, and runs with flying feet and outstretched neck. It is very shy, and, though four are allowed on a licence, few, even of those who desire to kill so many of such a lovely creature, are able to shoot more than one or two at most.

We made a careful stalk, but it had grown uneasy and had moved on, and, as we slowly tracked it, we stumbled right on to a rhino, asleep under some bushes and looking exactly

like a fallen trunk. I didn't want another then, and we backed quietly away without disturbing him, but lost all trace of the gerenuk. Besides all those varieties of game, we saw dotted about here and there some ostriches, which are entirely protected under a special ordinance for the sake of the eggs, which are collected and hatched, and also such smaller animals as jackal and hyrax, or rock-rabbit, while lion and leopard were undoubtedly in the neighbourhood, though we saw neither them nor their tracks that day.

Here C. shot a rhino and lost *Fras*i, his horse. The rhino had a calf, old enough to fend for itself and to hurt a man badly. This charged him furiously, and, though of course he didn't want to kill it and held his fire till it was almost on him, he then had to shoot, if not for his life, most certainly for his ribs. He managed to graze it only, however, and on this it swerved and made off, but he came very near to being seriously injured. The escapade of *Fras*i was rather odd; this was an Abyssinian pony, and a dear, gentle beast, which had always stood perfectly still on his dismounting and throwing the bridle-reins over its head, but this time it suddenly, for no accountable reason, took it into its head to bolt. It tore away from the tree to which it was loosely fastened, and in a



"A MOUNTAINOUS AND RUGGED COUNTRY"



"WE LOOKED RIGHT OVER A VAST PLAIN"

few minutes was vanishing among the distant trees with Kiboko, the merry young Kavirondo and our general factotum, in full chase. The horse appeared to know and enjoy its game; it would stop and graze, and spur Kiboko to further efforts, and then, just when he had hopes, off it would go again, but in the end the superior obstinacy of the human won, and he finally caught it over twenty miles away at the junction of the rivers. It had gone right back on our line of march, and was only checked by the barrier of the Guaso Nyiro. Kiboko returned late in the day with it in a triumph unusually deserved.

We now turned off the ordinary route along the Guaso Nyiro, and struck eastward into the hills for a few days. From a purely sporting point of view this was a mistake, for we found little game, but we were rewarded with some truly grand scenery. We passed beyond the plain into a mountainous and rugged country, embossed with huge, rocky kopjes and scored with deep cañons. Once while on the march we went after some guinea-fowl, and were led by them to a most glorious view. The ridge, along which we had been pursuing them, came to an abrupt halt, and from the edge of the crags we looked right over a vast, sandy plain covered thickly with stunted, scrubby thorn-

trees : it lay, like a great basin, surrounded on all sides by hills, and we were raised so high above it that the safari seemed like a line of ants making their slow, laborious way down into it and across it, and klipspringer, little rock-antelope, bounded from stone to stone below.

On our way north to rejoin the Guaso Nyiro, two incidents occurred—the first little enough in itself, but very amusing at the time, the second of a more serious nature. We were riding along when my companion came suddenly to the just conclusion that he could have no possible further use for a battered, old sun-helmet the cook's *mtoto*¹ was carrying. Realising the importance of acting without delay in fulfilment of a good resolution, he took it from the *mtoto*, and threw it casually into a thorn-bush, where it stuck. Instantly, as one man, Asmanie, late cook and now tent-boy, and my Abdulla, who apparently was not so content with boots as to ignore any other perquisites that might be going, made a straight dive for the despised headgear. Asmanie was a little nearer and won by inches, but they were inches of ludicrous pain, for he found himself

¹ Literally = baby ; hence a boy hired by a porter, or in this case the cook, to do part of his work for him. It is as well to see that these *mtotos* are fairly treated, and that no weaklings are allowed with the safari.

caught hand and foot by the clinging embrace of the "wait-a-bit" thorn, while all the safari, who were near, roared with laughter at him, and Abdulla was comforted for his ill-success. The helmet wouldn't have fitted Asmanie, even if it had been in the prime of its shape, but that didn't matter; when he discovered the misfit, he put it on over his usual fez; it was a source of much satisfaction to him and made him fancy himself like a Bwana. Practically no native is ever seen in a helmet except one of the big chiefs, so it was a real possession.

The other incident was a fight, which took place between our Kavirondo and some of the Kikuyu, at a time when both C. and myself were absent from camp, and our Somali headman again proved his lack of authority by being unable to stop. It arose from the loss of a *kababa*,¹ which had belonged to one of the Kikuyu, and had been found by a Kavirondo. The Kikuyu had claimed his property, and the Kavirondo had retorted that finding was keeping, whereupon a fight ensued. Of course the Kikuyu, in their usual way—a way that makes one admire their clanship and yet it is very annoying—immediately rallied to the support of their fellow, and on this two or three Kavirondo joined the mêlée; in all about ten

¹ Tin-cup used as a measure of *posho*, or for drinking.

82 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

Kikuyu and four Kavirondo were engaged. Now two Masai are said to have been capable of walking right through fifty Kikuyu in the days when the Masai were a terror in the land, but the weight of numbers here was too much for the Kavirondo, burly men though they were; the *kababa* was rescued, and the Kavirondo soundly beaten. A fight in this land of swords and *rungu* (knobkerries) may have very serious results, and we were lucky not to lose several men; as it was, a Kikuyu had his head split open, so we inquired formally into the matter and punished all participants, after which the head was sewed up, the *kababa* solemnly ground under the heel of justice, and there was peace.

The next excitement was one which seldom, so I am told, falls to the lot of a safari. We had reached the Guaso Nyiro again by striking due north, and were resting in our tent, utterly exhausted by the long hours of hunting we were putting in daily, when a boy brought us the information that a huge snake was asleep, "*hapana mbali sana*" (not very far away). There was a snake, and it was asleep, so perhaps to quarrel with the inaccuracy of the concluding words is captious; we jumped on our beasts without waiting for them to be saddled, and started off.



' GILA WATHI-IATHON '



" AS THICK ROUND AS A MAN'S THIGH "

Not even for an anaconda will I sit a mule bareback again ; during that tired, hot, and hurried ride I discovered a number of interesting facts about a mule's backbone, the predominating one being that it is composed of the sharpest and most rocky substance in the world. The horse cantered ahead, and this accursed beast joyfully took its revenge for all former injuries by jerky wobbings of its spine as it tore at the halter and raced after its companion. When I came upon the scene of action, I found C. watching a great water-python, which lay coiled up asleep on a bed of reeds on the further side of the Guaso Nyiro. It never occurred to either of us at the time, but I suppose we were technically transgressing the game-laws by firing into the Northern Game Reserve, the southern boundary of which is formed by the river. My coming aroused the python, and it began to move : we emptied two charges of buckshot and seven rifle-bullets into it before it was properly awake, but its head was never visible, and with undisturbed, easy motion it slid into the water, and was, as we thought, lost to us.

We returned to camp, and about four o'clock I strolled out alone with my rifle, so that I missed the end of the story. It appeared that

the Somali had again tempted the crocodiles by swimming across the river to investigate. He found the python, badly wounded, lying in the reeds, and had a little shoot all to himself. He missed it several times at very close range, and then deserted fire-arms for Kilangosi's spear; this he plunged right into the snake, which then thought it time to move; it bent the spear double, and glided off into a pool of shallow water. C. now appeared on the scene, and after a most glorious struggle the prize was secured; its head kept coming up out of the water like a dog's, and he fired at it till it ceased the performance. He couldn't tell for certain whether he had blown it to bits or not, but lay full-length on the bank, while two boys held his heels, and managed to get his arms round its body. Then everybody hauled, and amid the wildest excitement up it came; a rifle-barrel was hastily jammed into the mud between the brute and the water to prevent it slipping back, and then the clustering men pulled it right out, when its head was seen to be shattered.

It was borne in with song and shouting late at night, the carrying across the river being a difficulty; and the scene was a most striking one, as the men laid it out in the firelight. Kilangosi was very funny about it;

he refused even now to approach, saying he wasn't afraid of lion or buffalo, but he drew the line at a python, and he looked ruefully at his bent spear. The beast measured 16 ft. 2 inches, and weighed 200 lb.; it certainly was as thick round as a man's thigh. Its body was riddled with the buckshot, but I doubt if we should have got it, if a bullet had not glanced along it and ripped a great hole.

We stayed half a day while our whole force of Wakamba skinned and salted it, and then moved eastward along the Guaso Nyiro. It is strange country there; the river itself is very beautiful in places, and on either bank grow the great trees festooned with hanging moss. For about 30 yards the river makes a green and fertile strip, and all beyond is desperately hot, arid thorn-land, red-soiled and rocky. We saw oryx, gerenuk, and waterbuck, but game was not abundant, and we pushed steadily on towards the Isiolo, a small stream flowing north from Kenia into the Guaso Nyiro.

It was here that I first was given a realisation of how dangerous a rhino can be. I was following a waterbuck among the scrub, and was very disgusted at the disturbance the countless baboons were making at my ap-

proach, when suddenly the waterbuck I was after and had lost sight of raced across an opening in the trees about sixty or seventy yards ahead of me, and immediately afterwards a rhino tore over the rise, dashed across the path and was gone—a black and fearsome apparition. I had heard of the pace and silence with which a rhino can travel, and now I had definite experience of it: the going was stony and bushes were everywhere, yet I could not hear a sound; the bulk, pace, and, above all, the amazing silence left me speechless; he must have winded us, and elected to pass instead of bearing straight down upon the object of his uneasiness.

We were now anxious to stop some days, in order to hunt the herd of buffalo that live near the junction of the Isiolo with the Guaso Nyiro; but we had already been longer than we had intended on setting out from Rumuruti, and the supply of *posho* was getting low. It was clear that we must either get some more soon or push on towards Meru, and this dilemma led to an interesting and amusing disagreement with the authorities.

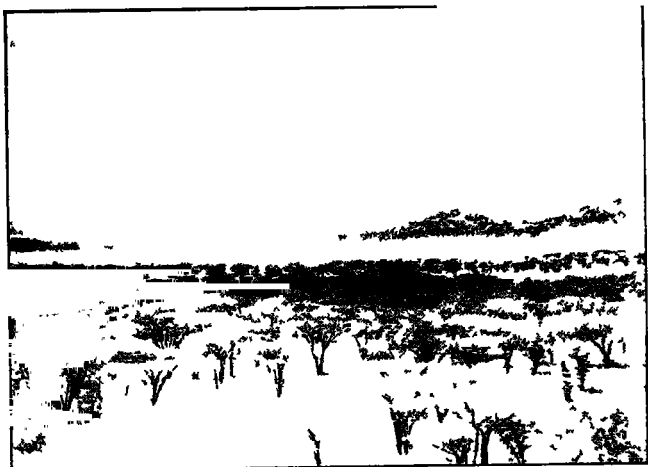
We knew that, not far from Neumann's old camp, a government post had been established on the Guaso Nyiro, and we accordingly sent Asmanie in to inquire if we could buy *posho*

there. We were not more than fifteen miles from the post, and he returned the same evening with the information that there was no Bwana or Indian store there, but that the native officer in charge had said he would give us what we required if we either came in ourselves or sent a signed letter of request. I did the latter, and again despatched Asmanie, together with ten or a dozen men to carry the loads. We obtained, not all the articles on the list I had sent, but the full amount of *posho* specified; our money was refused, and we were told to pay at headquarters in Nairobi on our return. It was not until reaching Meru that we had any idea that we had done anything unusual. Chancing to mention the matter to Mr. Horne, the District Commissioner at Meru, he told us that the post on the Guaso Nyiro was simply a half-way store for government supplies going up to Marsabit, the most northerly post towards Abyssinia. There were no supplies sent for sale, he said, and it was probable that those at Marsabit would go short for that month by the amount we had been given.

We thought and heard no more of the matter until our safari had come to an end, and I was at work in Nairobi. I was thinking of inquiring about our debt to the government, when Mr.

Newland, of Messrs. Newland, Tarlton & Co., asked me about what he called "forcing food from the police," a humorous phrase which was unintelligible to me till I was handed a letter sent to his firm under the impression that it had fitted out our safari. It was from the irate District Commissioner of Marsabit, and complained that the native officer in charge of the post, having evidently realised his mistake on being taxed with the shortage, had drawn instead on the stores of his imagination, and had given a most graphic account of my descent on the post; it would seem that I had held it up in the manner of an Australian bushranger, and carried off the food at the point of a revolver. It made a good story for the hungry Marsabittians, and it is small wonder that they were considerably displeased.

The supplies, thus wrongly obtained, enabled us to stay several days at the junction of the Isiolo with the Guaso Nyiro; but, though there were buffalo there, it was soon evident that they consisted of a single herd numbering about fifteen only, and we knew we should have many better chances later on. The only good chance either of us had at these was spoilt by the disobedience of C.'s two boys. We were hunting through the sandy thorn-scrub in parallel lines about a mile or more



"THE SANDY THORN SCRUB"



GRIVY'S ZIRA AND ABDULLA

apart. The herd evidently winded me; and stampeded towards C. Leaving Kiboko and Kilangosi with strict orders to stay where they were, he started with Mabruki to cut the herd off. This he succeeded in doing, and the buffalo were actually within twenty yards, thundering along in a cloud of dust, when the two boys suddenly appeared to one side, and the herd whirled and was gone. The dust was so thick that C. did not shoot.

I had been lucky enough to shoot a fair gerenuk some days previously, and now my companion secured one too. This is worth mention, because, though we saw gerenuk on several occasions, I found them so difficult to approach that our chances of shooting were very few. In a small area here, too, we found Grévy's zebra; this is a variety much larger and with thinner and more delicate striping than the common or Burchell's zebra. At a distance it looks like a great, grey horse, though on a near view it is rather the same as the other until both are put together. It is confined to a few places, though in those it is numerous, and a sportsman's licence allows twenty common zebra, but only two Grévy's. In the future no doubt some careful naturalist will explain why it is certain animals and species are found only in narrowly defined areas; there

90 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

was no obvious reason why Grévy's should flourish just here and not wherever the common zebra is found, and yet in two days we had passed beyond their range, and we saw them in no other place.

We saw here, too, impala and waterbuck, which came to drink by the little grove of palms along the lowest channel of the Isiolo, one of the few places of tropical appearance we saw ; the bulls of neither of these animals, however, had good heads, and cows predominated phenomenally. The sporting possibilities of this baking and thorny region we found to be soon exhausted, and after a few days' stay we moved camp southward up the course of the Isiolo.

CHAPTER V

UP THE ISIOLO TO MERU AND GUNGA

A first essay at skinning—Riding a lion—Unexpected rhino—Asmanie thinks—An unintentional night-walk—Superfluous energy and a tired safari—At Meru—A thief in camp—Above Lake Gunga.

THE first moving provided us with a morning of unusual interest. The safari followed a track along the stream, and my companion and I ranged one on each side of it. Pursuing an unsuccessful stalk alone, I contrived to lose Abdulla and my syce and mule completely. I returned to the course of the stream, and there saw and shot a respectable waterbuck; I waited, thinking it certain the shots would bring up the delinquents, but no one came except the oldest porter, a Wanyamwazi, by name Kaparimba. He was a model porter; he carried our great roll of blankets and coats in my Wolsey valise, was always one of the first in, and invariably sat on the valise immediately on getting in and solemnly rolled himself a cigarette; this I noticed because so few porters except the Kavirondo, who

smoked pipes after the manner of their tribe, smoked at all.

On this occasion I heard disconsolate shouts at regular intervals, and of course thought they were made by my boys looking for me, but they proceeded from Kaparimba, who had somehow got separated from the safari, and was wandering along with his roll, hopelessly lost, on the wrong side of the stream. The roll was not only heavy; it was also a very cumbrous load, and, though he could follow a track without difficulty with it on his shoulder or head, it was a sad hindrance to the old fellow's looking about him. I set him and our blankets on the right track, and then, determined not to lose my waterbuck's head, especially as it was the only one I had shot, I settled down to detach it by myself.

I had only one of those perfectly useless hunting knives a novice buys in London; they look very handsome and are a most clever collection of every fault that it is possible for a knife to have; their special advantage is that, being possessed of a fine handle, they fall out of the sheath if their carrier is so ill-advised as to bend down; also they have a point to dig into the flesh and a guard to prevent one cutting neatly with the shortened blade. The designer must have been a man of great in-



"THE OTTISI TOI IIA KALAMIA (IN CENTER)



"THEIR SPLENDID, SPIAK-LIKE HORNS' (AND PUNDA WHIA)

[See ha e 91]

genuity, coupled with a fine sense of humour. I gave mine to Abdulla after this, but even he was rude about it.

With this weapon I skinned and severed the head; my knowledge of skinning was of recent growth and it was stifling hot. I can confidently recommend this form of exercise; you know from watching that the spine can be snicked deftly through by a man who has practical knowledge of its anatomy, but this is only irritating when all that meets your knife is solid bone. The head came off at last after a kind of wrestling match, and I observed that my incomparable knife had now changed itself into a saw. I gathered up the head, and set forth after the safari; but luckily my boys found me after I had gone some five miles, and was just beginning to realise what it is to be a professional porter; a gory waterbuck's head is no slight weight, and is unpleasantly warm to carry.

Near camp, as we had no meat rendered fit for Mohammedan food—that is to say, none from an animal whose throat had been *halhalled* or cut by a Mohammedan while it was still living—I shot two oryx. I only meant to shoot one, but the second showed just where the first had disappeared, and I mistook it; the odd thing was that those two, thus casually

shot, had the longest horns of any we obtained. It is hard enough to judge the length of the horns of any antelope at first, but those of an oryx are particularly deceptive; all their splendid, spear-like horns seem long to an unaccustomed eye, and it is only after studying a great many that it is possible to tell which are long for an oryx. A really fine one will run as much as 38 inches or even more, but the ordinary traveller, who cannot linger and watch and wait, will probably have to be content with those of several inches less. Of course he may shoot a very long one at the very first essay; such luck has been known, but not often. The main thing, as even my little experience showed, is not to be in too great a hurry; one is only allowed to shoot four of the oryx Beisa, and they are to be found in vast numbers; the oryx Callotis, or fringed-eared variety, of which one may only shoot two, is not an inhabitant of this district at all.

On getting into camp I found my morning, successful though it had been, easily relegated to second place. C. had begun with small game, a steinbuck and a dik-dik, but had wound up by riding and killing a lion alone. Kilangosi, walking as usual at the head of the safari, had seen a lion slinking to his lair about ten o'clock, and had run with the news to C.

who was hunting not far off. A grand gallop ensued, in the course of which, and as he was gaining upon the lion, *Fras*i had put his foot in a hole and taken a complete somersault together with his rider. Luckily neither was injured, and on they went. When the lion first became aware that he was being pursued, he just quickened a trifle, but refused positively to change his direction; he seemed to be surprised that any one should dare to hunt him, the king of the plain. When he found that C. had the pace of him, he showed how well he knew the game; he stopped, and sat down behind a bush about 150 yards away, and seemed to say, "It's your move now, my friend; I've run far enough."

C. was really ill-equipped for single combat; he had only the rifle he had been using for antelope, a Springfield, the U.S. Army rifle, which has a calibre about equal to a .303, and he had few cartridges, most of which had the pointed, hard-nosed bullets he was testing. The lion was almost obscured by the bush, and so for a while they watched one another. Out of this very promising start something exciting ought to have developed; if the lion had charged home, he could hardly have been stopped in time by the Springfield; but he probably thought his enemy too far, and

96 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

hoped he would come nearer. It had in fact a very tame end ; C. sat down, keeping his five soft-nosed bullets in his magazine in case of a charge, and managed after several shots to kill the lion where he was with a hard-nosed bullet. Our Wakamba were kept pretty busy skinning by this one morning's work.

Near this camp was a triangle formed by the hills, in which among the brush and thorns were many buffalo, but hunting them was dangerous and unsatisfactory work ; it was exceedingly difficult to pick a head in such stuff, and any one going on to Embu, where there are buffalo in immense numbers, would be wasting time to try long for them here.

There was a rumour of the greater kudu, the most beautiful of all antelopes, on this line of hills, named, I think, Kilima 'Ngombe, but we never saw even the tracks of one. I spent one day climbing the hills in the hope of so splendid a trophy, but had only a story of forcing my way down at last through thorns. They were there in every variety of both size and shape to tear and madden, while great sheaves of daggers stuck up from the ground to make the descent as dangerous as it was toilsome. On arriving back on the plain, tired, hot, and scratched, I began to appreciate the value of Abdulla.

He had had a very stormy morning, and was enough to put any one in a good temper. In the first place he had lost me again and, wandering disconsolate through the scrub, had met C. C. had had a tiring time after buffalo ; everything had gone wrong, and to find this dreary idiot disturbing all the game in the part he was hunting, and murmuring plaintively to himself "*Wapi Bwana ?*" (Where's my master?) was the last straw. Poor, worthy Abdulla was rudely wakened from his monologue by a forcible inquiry as to his present occupation and a brilliant description of the under-world. On retiring with much tact from this painful scene in the direction in which I was supposed to be, he entered upon further trouble, for which a rhino was responsible. As he meditated upon the lack of appreciation with which his misfortune had been received, he stumbled upon the rhino ; the next moment he was half-way up a tree. He seems to have been in some haste, and to have chosen badly, for when I found him, he was still picking thorns out of himself after his frenzied climb.

We had come unexpectedly upon many rhino by this time : twice in one morning I found myself suddenly within twenty yards of one. There can be few meetings much more disconcerting, because no one can tell what the

beast will do ; it doesn't know itself until it has gravely considered the matter within its lymphatic brain, but I was never once charged. I always carried a .405 Winchester in my holster, loaded with five hard-nosed bullets for just such an emergency ; but it is so often when one is trailing a beast, and has one's regular rifle with nothing but soft-nosed bullets in it, that one stumbles on the rhino round the corner.

C. was charged in very determined fashion on one occasion ; luckily it was in a comparatively open space, and he had plenty of time to be prepared : he struck it four times with .405 hard-nosed bullets—three times between the neck and shoulder, and once on the top of the spine—but for some reason the shots had absolutely no effect, though every one should have been fatal ; perhaps the bullets broke up, for it still came on, and was only stopped not many yards from him by a shot from his heavy gun. But this instance would seem to be exceptional, and the rhino to be maligned ; some writers give the impression that they invariably charge at sight, but perhaps we were unusually fortunate. We must have actually seen thirty or forty, apart from those who had the sense to remain hidden, and this was the only occasion when a deliberate attack was made.

•

Their danger undoubtedly lies in their vast stupidity ; the elephant has learned the power of modern rifles ; the rhino fondly imagines he is still in the days of the spear, and that his hide is practically impervious. Once when the safari was passing along a forest-trail through very thick undergrowth, a rhino snorted a few yards off and then blundered through the line, but this may have been only a startled escape from the tainted air. It was rather a disaster though, for the men were scattered with fine agility, and seventeen of our phonograph records of native songs were broken.

The Somali made an odd mistake about a rhino one day, when he was with me as my gunboy ; we saw a large, black form behind a bush, and he offered to bet me a hundred rupees it was a great bull buffalo, saying he could see its tail. I looked with my Zeiss glasses, and was almost sure it was a rhino, but the bush obscured it, and it had a strange appearance as of branching horns. We stalked it, but the nature of the ground prevented our seeing it again until we were within 15 yards of it on the other side of the bush ; it was then seen to be indubitably a rhino, and the seeming horns dissolved into startled rhinobirds. We did not want to shoot it, and beat a

silent retreat, leaving the rhino deeply puzzled by the whole affair.

While we were hunting in this triangle of hills Asmanie surpassed himself in intelligence. We were using the Somali as a gunboy after buffalo, his bravery being beyond question and his powers of tracking high, and camp was temporarily without an acting headman. We had pitched it further than was necessary from the triangle, and now desired to move it one hour nearer on to a parallel little stream. We called up Asmanie, made him headman for the day, and explained our desire precisely. We told him ourselves, and the Somali told him; knowing Asmanie, we took every possible means to avoid a mistake, and he said he understood.

Returning from hunting, I ran across C., who had then been looking for camp three hours; together we ranged along the little stream to what we considered the two extreme limits of Asmanie's stupidity, and then, picking up the trail by our old camp, we solemnly followed it as if it had been a wounded animal. Fortunately the ground was of a sandy, bare nature, so that we could do this without much difficulty, and after riding for a further three hours we found camp. It had been moved about fifteen miles away in an entirely wrong direction, to a

stream quite unsuspected ; but Asmanie greeted us with such serene unconsciousness of not having done exactly right, that words failed us, and we were left wondering at the intricate convolutions of the native brain.

It is poor enough fun searching for camp mounted and with one's friend ; there is nothing whatsoever to be said for it on foot and with a monotonous boy. The very next day I missed camp in these circumstances : both Abdulla and I understood that camp was to be moved six hours up the main stream of the Isiolo, whereas in fact it was moved two up a branch stream. The ground was too bad for riding, being a blend of great stones and soft, clinging volcanic ash, so I pushed on on foot, and at dusk must have been some 15 miles beyond camp. I fired the three shots we had agreed on as a signal—it is as well we have one of some sort—but no answering shots came, and just then a strange delusion set us walking again. Far away on a hill we saw a red gleam we took to be a camp-fire ; it was hidden as we walked towards it, and an hour later we saw it was the rising moon, which had just showed between the top of the hill and the bottom of a heavy cloud.

We were badly lost, and Abdulla was no help ; he was devoting himself to a single

sentiment, and "*Masai mbaya sana*" (Masai very bad) came at regular intervals from his lips. He had misunderstood Kilangosi as I had done, but his resentment didn't profit us now. Food and water were with my syce, who was by this time safely in camp, but it was no use walking aimlessly in the gloom, especially as my boots had given out and the kicking of thinly protected toes on boulders, and sudden springs to save a headlong fall are far from painless, if persisted in. Abdulla now found a second fire; but I refused to be fooled a second time. I didn't know the Swahili for "star," but I was certainly not going to gratify his propensity for wandering again. We collected some wood, and made ourselves comfortable against some rocks to await the coming of the dawn.

Only those who have walked until they were utterly weary are able to appreciate the disinclination to leave that resting-place which came to me when Abdulla sat up and said he really did see a fire. I cursed Abdulla's fire, and lay still. I recalled the story of C.'s mate on his Alaskan trip: he had not returned to camp one bitter, pouring night; so a self-sacrificing friend sallied forth to look for him; he found him at last, ensconced in a nook, protected from the rain by the skin of a freshly

killed caribou, and comfortably cooking some meat over a blazing fire, and was greeted with the disconcerting query, "Well, what in hell d'you want?"

However, I had neither food nor water, and even wood was scarce, so when Abdulla continued to say, more to himself than to me, in a very doleful voice, "*Mingi moto*" (many fires), I roused myself, and we struck out again towards the distant gleam, on a tramp only less painful because it had now become a glorious moonlit night, and the largest boulders could be avoided. The gleam seemed to recede from us in the most extraordinary manner, but we reached it at last, and found to our unspeakable disgust that its movement was no delusion; it was a grass fire, not the lights of camp. It had been lighted, however, by some boys sent out by my companion, and we eventually found them, and were piloted another six miles to camp, which we reached at 1 A.M., after twelve hours on the tramp. The impression of that camp, silent and peaceful in the moonlight, is one that will not easily fade.

This little adventure afforded another example of the mysterious workings of the black man's brain. C., knowing from my syce's return that I had no provisions with me, sent

some out by one of the boys with special instructions to give them to me. When they found us, it did not occur to him to tell me, and he solemnly carried them back with us into camp.

This missing of camp was very rare: we always held a consultation, fixed the exact distance and direction of the next camp with Kilangosi's aid, and found it without any difficulty when we turned from hunting, even if we had not previously joined the safari on the concluding stages of its march. It is not possible to do any serious tracking while camp is being moved; but there is no need to remain all the time with the safari, though it is certainly advisable to go with it from time to time, just to see that the men are all right and the loads fairly apportioned.

The country through which we were now marching was remarkable for the abundance of birds. Guinea-fowl in packs of thirty and forty were everywhere, and there were also numbers of the francolin partridge and sand-grouse: in fact, better shot-gun shooting could hardly be found anywhere; but, owing to the unfulfilled hope of coming across fresh buffalo tracks, we let this side of sport slip until we were beyond the best of it.

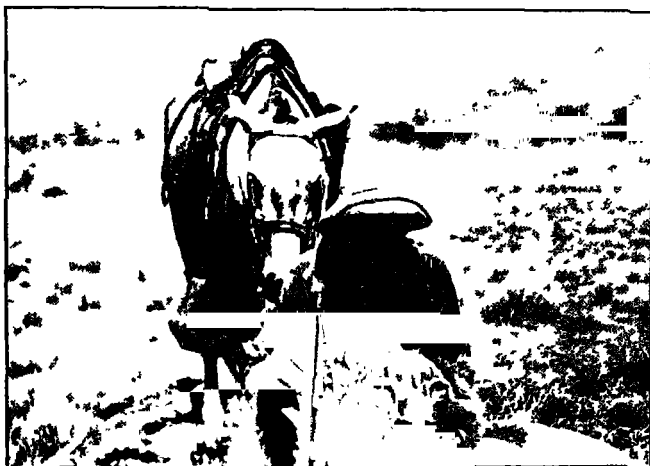
It had been our intention to go to Lake

Gunga before Meru, but Kilangosi, who alone knew the road, had been sent to guide some porters we had despatched ahead to bring out more *posho*, and we took the track leading straight to Meru by mistake. The unjustified assurance of the Somali was well illustrated by this: we asked him if any of the porters knew the road; he said glibly that six or seven, who were leading the line, knew it well. We had our doubts, and, riding on ahead, asked the men ourselves. Not one had the smallest idea where he was going; they were trustfully following one of the innumerable trails across the plain, like so many blissful sheep. The confidence reposed in the omniscience of their Bwanas rather took us aback; but a careful study of the latest map obtainable in Nairobi enabled us to continue without misgiving until we met a native cow-herd, who agreed to go with us as a temporary guide to Meru.

On this day's march, the longest we ever made, lasting over ten hours, the Kikuyu demonstrated what unbounded energy lies concealed in their comparatively small frames. We had been going several hours, and, not knowing exactly when we should next strike water, called a brief halt at some little pools of alkaline water. It was one of the most

attractive scenes of the whole safari—hills in the distance, dotted plain immediately around, and all the men squatting by the pools in the rocky foreground. Their thirst slaked, several Kikuyu gathered in a ring and employed the remaining minutes of rest in a kind of jumping dance, which they kept up until the safari resumed its loads and straggled on. Later in the day they must have regretted this superfluity of exercise, for the cow-herd led us for two hours along broken-down elephant-paths through a thick, matted forest. There was constant necessity for stooping under arching boughs and struggling through detaining creepers; the horse and mule had to be slowly led, and the porters must have had an awful time.

Here the Kikuyu scored over the *pukka* porters; the latter carry their loads on the head or resting on the shoulder, the Kikuyu on the loins, supported by a strap across the forehead. The man most to be pitied was the unfortunate who carried the long bamboo poles for supporting the big tent-fly we used as a stable and storehouse; he must have sidled along the whole way, for he was a Kikuyu and carried them slung crosswise, and even then have been hung up at every other step. It was an utterly tired safari that emerged, but



THE END OF THE RIDE

[5 p. 4. 90]



"ONE OF THE MOST ATTRACTIVE SCENES"

a very short march next day brought us into Meru, and there the men could rest.

Asmanie's intelligence was again prominent that evening: we had had no food for many hours, and urged him to get dinner with extra rapidity. After a tremendous interval of impatience, C. went to his fire to investigate, and found him diligently polishing a lamp-globe!

The district of Meru is one into which comparatively few people go; most make a round from Rumuruti, and then strike across to Nyeri. It had only been brought under control three years and no one even then was supposed to enter it without a permit, but this is not strictly enforced; at any rate, we had no knowledge that a permit was necessary, and were only told we ought to have had one. The Meru, unlike the Masai, are not nomadic, and signs of considerable cultivation met us as we neared the government post: we passed through groves of banana trees and fertile *shambas* (farms), and then struck the best and broadest road we had met anywhere except just round Nairobi itself. The war-strength of the tribe has been much impaired by the internecine and intertribal feuds which raged unchecked until the establishment of the government post; but the number of natives attracted by our coming testified to the large population, and, though so

recently an unknown and hostile tribe, they were perfectly friendly. It is true that my companion complained of the lack of enthusiasm with which they returned his cheery greeting; but I pointed out to him that he was calling out "*Mguu*" (the Swahili word for "foot") in the belief that he was giving the Meru salutation "*Muga*."

Mr. Horne, the District Commissioner, had had no one through Meru for some months; but that was no real explanation of his unstinted kindness to us. It is he who has taught the Meru to carry loads, training them after the professional porter, not the Kikuyu style: before his coming they were fighters only, being, like the Masai, under the El Moran or warrior system. He is naturally proud of his protégés, and certainly those he helped us to engage were most admirable porters and beat even the Wanyamwazi into camp.

He also secured us the services of one genuine 'Nderobo, who was acquainted with the latest movements of the elephants near. Two others joined on, but they were useless and soon discarded; the third, who was an old man and had a wizened little face, like a puckered apple, was of the greatest assistance. He could creep forward through the tangles of the forest and locate the elephants unnoticed,



6 IN A KIND OF JUMIN DANCE

1



6 A DANCE OF THE MIFU WOMEN

for, as Mabruki said, he was of the jungle brotherhood. Mr. Horne also gave us much valuable information as to the hunting near, and we left him with the most pleasant memories. I was struck both by the loneliness and also the interest of his life; most District Commissioners have a certain drifting society and a district which has been administered before, but here in this new and outlying part there was work for the founder as well as for the administrator; the system of irrigation ditches he has made round the government station is a most admirable piece of work by itself.

We were fortunate here in seeing a dance of the Meru women; two girls were undergoing a *marriage ceremony*, and some thirty matrons were dancing in celebration on the spread of lawn in front of the station, while a number of natives squatted in a line to watch. It was a wild, uncouth affair, consisting in shouts, beatings of little drums, and short runs of the two principals from the swaying line of women.

At Meru too, Amisi rejoined us; we had sent him back to several old camps on discovering the one serious theft of the trip. We suffered numerous petty pilferings of stores, sugar, the few tins of potted meat and some chocolate we had with us, but these, though

extremely vexatious, were comparatively unimportant. The big loss was the theft of some ten rolls of my companion's photographs, containing one hundred pictures of the early weeks. They may have been taken out of spite, but more probably they were stolen for the sake of the little *kababas*, the tropical tins in which they were encased, which are always coveted for snuff-boxes, tobacco-pouches, &c. This matter of thieving brought into the relations between ourselves and our men the only uncomfortable feelings of the whole trip.

After all the usual worries of procuring *posho* and other necessities, which were increased by Asmanie's strange inability to remember what was needed for ourselves until the very last minute of our stay in a place, and after circumventing the ordinary business dishonesty of the Indian storekeepers, we got under way again. The safari went straight to Lake Gunga, but we took a road through a forest full of the most gigantic trees, and after a most lovely ride emerged on to a grassy moorland, like an English rather than an African scene, and then after an inspection of the neighbourhood of the elephant we swerved down to our new camp.

On our way through the forest we met many Meru, mostly girls laden with great bundles

of firewood, making their way laboriously into the station, and once we came suddenly round a bend in the track on a fascinating group. Some ninety men were staggering along, carrying the trunk of a huge tree by means of slings and holds, probably to be used in the construction of one of Mr. Horne's bridges. We tried to take a photograph of the unusual scene, which looked exactly like a great caterpillar crawling through the forest, but it was set in the damp, cool gloom beneath the interlacing branches, and no success attended us.

Lake Gunga was once a crater ; it is now a lily-covered pool of extraordinary beauty, with steep and densely wooded sides. We encamped above it on the level some two hundred feet from the water ; high grass enclosed the camp at one end, the slope of a hill at the other, and on the fourth side the plain stretched in long undulations below us till it reached the distant slopes that formed the horizon. In this lovely camp and in another a few miles nearer the forest we lingered many days whilst my companion hunted elephant.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE FORESTS NEAR MERU

Trials of the jungle—The accursed rhino—The definition of an accident—A prophetic utterance—The African elephant at home—A glorious hour—A cannibalistic carnival—The great elephant-dance.

THAT elephants were in the neighbourhood there was abundant evidence, but whether my companion's hunting would be attended with success in the short time that it was possible for us to remain near Meru seemed doubtful. Each camping ground had been so hard to leave that we had fallen a long way behind the time we had planned out for ourselves, with the result that a few weeks only remained, and of the three beasts most to be desired, lion alone had been secured. To find a big buffalo head may be the work of weeks, and no one is ever sure of getting his elephant. It seemed, however, that any one who could afford to watch and wait had a fine chance near Meru, for the herd could occasionally be found in the open while changing their feeding ground, and at times they roamed along the fringes of the forest ; but for

the most part they had their abode in its dense heart, and it is probable that there is no more dangerous sport in the world than to hunt the East African elephant in such conditions.

The great hunter, Sir Samuel Baker, considered elephant shooting in any conditions the most dangerous of all sports, if fairly followed for a length of time ; and here the elephants, in addition to the tangle of their chosen haunts, had been disturbed enough to make them, if not actually vindictive, at least ready to take the aggressive on every slight provocation. They choose mostly those places where the great trees are few and far between, and the forest has degenerated into a wild, thick and thorny jungle ; its only paths are those made by the rhino and the elephant himself, and, except along these, it presents a barrier through which man can pass only with the utmost difficulty, torn and held at every step, whilst the elephant goes straight ahead with as little hindrance as in the open. To be charged by one elephant on such unequal terms, when you can barely crawl and a thorn bush has you by the neck, is not the most enviable of occupations, and the herd may charge in a thundering mass which flattens everything before it. Yet after all that is a case of the pursued turning pursuers ; it has at least a

touch of justice about it, and its possibility must always be present. The elephant hunter has no right to feel aggrieved if it is an elephant which turns the tables upon him, but he may well resent being ended by the sudden onslaught of a rhino. As he makes his way through the tangle, this is a perpetual danger, and not merely a danger, but also an exceeding irritation. A shot may spoil his chances of success for weeks, if not altogether, yet the unjustifiable interference of a rhino may force him to shoot to save his life; and the mere obnoxious proximity of one, thrashing about uneasily in brush that will completely hide it at a few yards' distance, will necessitate a detour which may destroy the carefully *thought-out plan of campaign*.

In the days that followed C. had more than one illustration of this, and he came to the fixed conclusion that, though in the open a rhino could be treated with some contempt, in the brush it was Hell, and that was the only way of expressing it. Once he and his boys came suddenly on a vicious little rhino glaring at them about fifteen yards away and entirely blocking their advance—a post of vantage which completely upset an elaborate stalk; and on another occasion, as they were on their way home, they were so much disgusted with one

that they whistled and shouted at it, as it blundered across their path. It spun round, and came straight for them, but swerved at a shot, and departed, snorting with rage. C. said it was exactly like the story of a prospector he had met in Western Alaska. The prospector saw a grizzly bear digging for gophers just below him on the mountain side, and in a spirit of fun rolled a stone down at him. The grizzly dropped his gopher, and rushed at his flippant assailant like a thing possessed. "I didn't suppose he'd get mad about a little thing like that," concluded the prospector.

In spite of all these risks, however, a very short space of time was enough to convince my companion that there was nothing for it but to follow the tracks into the jungle, unless he was to return home without an elephant; and on my return to camp the second evening, after a day spent as far as possible from the supposed locality of the herd, I found that the death of an elephant was already an accomplished fact. I was about to offer my hearty congratulations when I was stopped by some forcible and deeply felt maledictions: condolences, it appeared, were required, for half C.'s licence had been used up on an interfering cow. By a provision of the Game Ordinance 1910 any tusks weighing less than 30 lb. a-piece must be

surrendered to the government, a provision framed to protect immature and cow elephants, whose tusks only in very rare instances average so much. The wisdom of some such rule cannot be doubted, but the humorist has naturally seized upon it, and declared that no conscientious sportsman would dream of taking the field without a pair of scales in which to weigh the tusks of any elephant he wished to shoot.

The government, however, is very fair, and makes an exception in the case of animals "killed by accident." The legal definition of "accident" was now occupying C.'s mind; he was quite ready to surrender the tusks, provided he was still at liberty to shoot two bulls, and he betook himself into Meru to argue the point. Is it an accident when a man fires only in the last resort to save his life and the lives of the boys with him? Nothing was further from C.'s intentions when he set out than to kill a cow—he was after bulls, and big tuskers at that, and he certainly did his utmost to avoid the necessity; but the government hold the view that if a man puts himself in the way of elephants, it is not an "accident" if he has to kill a cow; it is a probable, or at any rate a possible, eventuality for which he must be prepared.

Mr. Horne had been not merely discouraging ; he had unfortunately also been prophetic. He had candidly warned us that the present time was most inopportune, since all the elephants were in the densest part of the forest, where there was no chance of picking out the best ivory, and the chances were that the sportsman would be charged by a vicious old cow ; and he had added, " Even if she doesn't get you, which is very probable, her ivory won't be much use." The end of it was, C. kept the tusks, and had half his licence accounted used. What had happened was this.

He had struck fresh elephant tracks, and followed them for hours through dense jungle into a matted swamp. Once Elmi, the Somali, whom he had taken with him as well as Mabruki, the Wakamba, sank to his shoulder, and had to be pulled out ; but the elephants had just been drinking there, and they pushed on hopefully until they emerged again into the gloom of the thick jungle. Suddenly close to them the undergrowth shook, and they found themselves right among the herd ; they moved down a parallel path to get a sight of them, when five or six elephants came with leisurely might through the tangle and crossed the path ; then another came to the path, and

stopped suspiciously. The two worthless Wanderobo chose this particular moment to climb a tree somewhere in the rear, and the elephant came slowly forward to investigate. As the great beast advanced with stately grandeur, swinging its trunk and sniffing, C. saw that it was an old cow, and stood with his two boys absolutely motionless, trusting that they would pass unnoticed in the gloom of the forest, and that the elephant would turn after the others where the path branched a few yards away. But at about ten yards' distance she stopped dead; her wicked little eyes looked full at the intruders; her trunk went far forward sniffing the air; then the huge ears rose and the whole mass rushed forward. C. fired once deliberately at the base of her trunk, and a second time instinctively at her chest, and she swung off and crashed away through the bushes.

The measurement from the spot where he stood to the nearest foot-mark was just four yards! Yet those who have set their hearts upon securing so great a prize as a big bull elephant will perhaps appreciate that the dominant thought in his mind was not relief, but fury and disappointment, and one of the Wanderobo who had drawn the charge received a disheartening reception on approaching, beaming

with joy, to inform him that the cow had fallen dead a few hundred yards away. He had begun to hope that his shots had failed to penetrate sufficiently to do much damage; but now he accepted the inevitable, porters were sent for, and he returned moodily to camp.

Inspection of the carcase revealed marksmanship of a quite extraordinary order. Close behind, Elmi, the Somali, had stood with a second gun; he had, it is almost needless to say, the very strictest orders never to fire it himself, but on this occasion there was some excuse for his disobedience. There was no time in which a second gun could be used, and, after the first shot had failed to check the charge, he may be forgiven for believing his end was at hand. Mabruki had stood like a wooden image with C.'s heavy double rifle pushed forward in readiness; Elmi was shaking like a leaf with excitement, not with fear, and very likely his whole action was unconscious. At any rate, when the elephant was at the most six or seven yards away, he fired both barrels of the gun he was carrying. Such a feat could hardly be repeated to order, and, indeed, seems almost incredible, but he succeeded in missing the mass completely.

A long day followed in which a rhino inter-

ferred, and when C. did come up with the herd a cow obscured his view. He fired through its ear for the brain of the bull beyond, but without success; and so we shifted camp from above Lake Gunga, and pitched it on the edge of the forest a few miles away. The first camp was one of unusual beauty, but many of our porters suffered from sickness, due very likely to drinking the stagnant water of the lake; at any rate the symptoms gradually disappeared with the change.

It is probable that I was unconsciously one of the factors of my companion's ultimate success. Mythical eland existed far away on the other side of camp, and I was returning about four o'clock one afternoon after a very long and entirely fruitless search for them. No elephants were supposed to be in this direction, and I was jogging along on my mule, my syce in front, my gunboy and a porter behind, with little thought of interruption save from a rhino, when suddenly my syce came to a very abrupt halt, and pointed. Barely 200 yards away, directly in front of us on a little knoll, and screened on every side except ours by the jungle, were huddled a herd of elephants. Such a sight can seldom have fallen to the lot of any man by chance. C. was seeking them unremittingly and unavailingly in that part of

the forest where they were believed to be; my steady endeavour had been to avoid them, and give him a clear field for his hunting; and here they stood before me. No more impressive sight could be imagined than this great herd in their home; they might have been posing deliberately for me, so aptly had they chosen their resting place, and fortunately we were coming up wind and the distance was too great for their poor sight to detect us. I flung myself off my mule, and, seizing my Zeiss glasses, I took in every line of them. They were standing in a solid mass, their restless trunks over each other's backs, and their vast ears flapping ceaselessly. There seemed to be about forty altogether; some were babies, and I made out the tusks of two bulls. The average man is accustomed to think of the elephant as a mild and beneficent creature, a being of picture books, and the children's delight, the stately monarch of a Zoo. The African elephant in his forests leaves one impression only—that of terrible power; as an experienced hunter once remarked to C., "Well, if I ever get to Hell, I expect the Devil will look just like an African elephant." The short gleaming tusks of the cows had an aspect as of fangs; the bulk of the dark, silent mass, the snake-like trunks,

the huge, restless ears, and the setting of the vast wild jungle, made up a picture impossible ever to forget.

My study was rudely broken by an exhibition of unselfishness. The herd seemed to divine what they could neither see nor smell; they became uneasy, and the weird sound of their trumpeting added yet another detail to a thrilling moment. Upon this my boys, who had watched as eagerly as I, became suddenly aware that they were impeding their Bwana's view, and with unanimous generosity proceeded to place themselves in the rear. I dropped my glasses and made a hasty grab for my gunboy, and, having rescued my gun, turned again to the herd, not that a gun would have availed much, had they really stampeded; thick, low brush was all around, and not a tree was near which they could not have snapped like a twig. They contented themselves with uneasiness, however, and after taking careful note of the exact spot we made a wide detour, both out of prudence and to avoid disturbing them further, and hurried back to camp to tell my companion of our discovery. It was not needed, for his wishes were fulfilled, and a bull elephant had fallen to his rifle. On comparing notes, it seemed likely that it was one of those I had so closely watched, and

that the uneasiness of the herd had started them soon after I had left, and so sent them in C.'s direction.

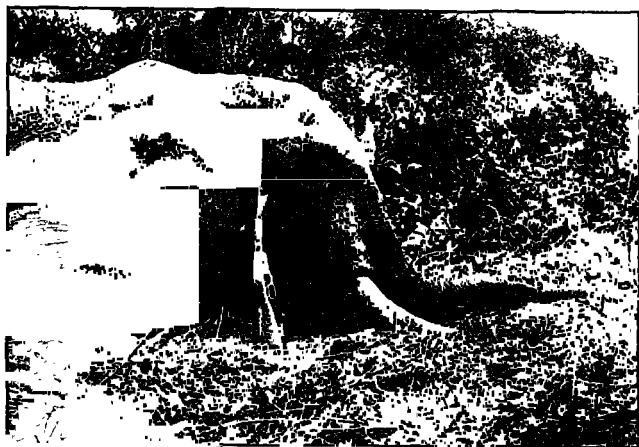
He must have had a glorious hour. He was in a mass of tangled thorn-scrub 10 to 15 feet high, with occasional large trees scattered through it. This was much more favourable country, for by climbing these he could survey the position; and the fact that he did so in all probability saved his life. The stalk when he and his boys had located the elephants was a very difficult one; the herd was split up into two bunches, and between them they made out what seemed to be a very good bull. They took certain trees for guide-posts, and worked their way with the utmost caution towards it. Nothing was to be seen when they reached the spot for which they were aiming; they climbed a tree, descended, crept on and climbed again until, when they were up a stout tree and believing they had neared their quarry, suddenly, in C.'s phrase, "all Hell broke loose to leeward," and twenty elephants or more came tearing up-wind, crushing down jungle and trees, a truly grand and terrible sight. They rushed on, and were joined by others, and then the whole herd returned and deliberately searched for him; great pieces of the jungle were flattened right out, and no

one on the ground would have stood a chance for his life. At last one of the bulls stopped for an instant broadside on about 100 yards away, and C. made a fine shot from the tree; the bullet struck it fairly through the brain, and it sank down upon its knees, stone dead. Immediately afterwards the other bull came clearly into view; the first was a very large animal, and C. had thought it to have the finer tusks, but those of the other showing now were in fact finer, and constituted a temptation the strength of which only those who have experienced something at all similar can really appreciate; his licence was filled, however, and he let it crash off with the rest of the mighty herd.

It was too late to start work upon the fallen mass that evening, but the day following was probably the most intensely interesting of the whole trip. Early in the day, before the sun gained power, we set out for the spot together; we took our syces and gunboys only, and left instructions for all the available porters in camp to follow after a short interval. A rhino with a good horn had been seen several times between our destination and camp, but now that a meeting was rather desired than otherwise, we reached the dead elephant without being disturbed. My companion's story had



"IT SANK DOWN UPON ITS KNEES, STONE DEAD"



"ITS TUSKS, THOUGH VERY THICK, WERE RATHER SHORT"

been vivid enough, but a view of the scene impressed it on my mind with the still greater eloquence of silence. Everywhere were traces of that tremendous, terrible onslaught; here the jungle was nothing but a crushed and mangled glade, and here great branches were wrenched from the neighbouring trees. We took some photographs and made our measurements; the bull was a huge beast, but its tusks, though very thick, were rather short.

As we finished, through the jungle came the animated sounds of our little army of boys, all in the wildest spirits at the prospect of unlimited gorging. My companion was anxious to secure the whole scalp, and so our trained skinners were set to work at once to remove it; the muscles of some of the most trustworthy boys were exercised at the same time on the job of detaching the feet, while the rest hovered about on the carcase, tearing off as much of the meat as they could. In an incredibly short time the whole scene, which had been grand and solemn as the great elephant rested undisturbed in his death, was transformed into a carnival, at once bestial and riveting. Soon blood and meat were scattered in extraordinary profusion; soon the skinners had made a deep gulley of the neck, throwing great chunks of meat behind them as they

cleared the way for the severing of the spine ; blows to break through the massive leg-bones and free the feet resounded ; a little ring of fires sprang up from the brushwood round the beast ; men hacked off their chunks and began roasting them clamorously, and then, before even the outside was properly done, devoured them with every expression of satisfaction. One Kikuyu, I remember, had his own picturesque set of dinner-manners ; he seized one end of the meat in his mouth, pulled on the other, solemnly shaved it off at his lips with his sword, and swallowed the lump left behind with a gulp and a smile. A prodigious amount was eaten then and there, but, when even native capacity could stretch no further, the chunks began to rise in their disfigurement on every bush and tree in the place. Never have I seen such an utterly cannibalistic scene.

At last the head and three feet were off ; the fourth foot was doubled under the carcase, and it became necessary to roll that over. We called the gluttonous horde from their fires, and then strained every muscle. Five of us could turn a rhino over without undue exertion ; more than forty were needed here, and for a long time our united efforts were unavailing. Levers were brought, and finally the great beast yielded to one great, concerted heave ;

when once he had started, he rolled fast, and the three or four men who were pulling on strips of his hide, since there was no room for all to push, had to make one frenzied leap to escape being crushed beneath him. It was well on in the afternoon before the scalp had been carefully removed and the tusks hacked out of the skull, and it was a gory, meat-laden procession which bore them back to camp. We ourselves had been standing, watching and directing, for eight or nine hours on end, and had had about enough for one day; but not so the indefatigable African, who topped his exertions and his gluttony by his regular evening meal, and was ready to begin all over again.

We had just finished dinner, which was early, as we *had had nothing but a little bread since morning*—somehow raw elephant had not appealed irresistibly to us—when we heard the sound of song and the heavy tramp of feet growing nearer and nearer, and presently round the corner of our wind-screen of wattled grass, into the ring of light cast by a most glorious log-fire, stamped madly rather than danced the line of our seven Kavirondo porters, together with a queer one-eyed Wakamba, who was too full of energy to miss such a chance of exercise, all singing with the utmost vigour. They hadn't the field to themselves for long,

however ; soon we heard another sound of song and dancing feet, and a body of thirty or forty Kikuyu entered on the scene. Hopelessly as the Kavirondo were out-numbered, they had no intention of giving in tamely ; though they were gradually pushed to one side and back from the fire, they continued for upwards of an hour to stamp and sing. Presently, too, our nine men of Meru, more bashfully as became the newly joined, grew near and sang in a line ; but finally the superior numbers of the Kikuyu silenced the other two tribes and drove them from the field. The triple dance and song—each, even if closely abutting, kept perfectly distinct—was far from inharmonious ; but it was not until the Kikuyu were dancing and singing alone that the whole weird beauty of the scene came home to us.

The Kikuyu have not what a European would dignify by the name of music, but they have a marvellous instinct for time. These now before us had come from various parts, but they might have been rehearsing their dances together for months, so perfectly did the chorus rise as one voice and the dancers' movements coincide. They had a wealth of figures, but one was especially memorable. In this the dance took the form of a mimic duel, and, as the voices sang, pairs advanced,

retreated, crouched, and wheeled in the ring of fire-light. Every now and again the stolid askari on duty would kick the logs and send up a great shower of sparks to glint on the swords and spears. It was a wonderful, enthralling sight, so utterly savage and yet so completely under control. Once it seemed to melt by magic into order when my companion spoke to move an onlooker who was spoiling his view and the Kikuyu thought he was telling them to stop. Very few safaris take Kikuyu porters on account of their trick of sudden desertion, and it took time and trouble to turn ours into personal friends, but all was amply repaid by that one evening. They danced in all for a full two hours in honour of the slayer of the elephant, and, even if they did try and improve the hour by a request for "backsheesh" at the end, their action had originated from a simpler and higher motive and was not spoil for us.

CHAPTER VII

SIDE-LIGHTS

- A plea for lingerers—The African dawn—The hours after dark—A memorable group—The co-existence of kingship and insignificance—The nonentity of Time—Haircutting extraordinary—Care of the trophies—Medical gossip and popular dentistry—An unwelcome intruder—An old lady of Meru hears the devil—Tribal songs recorded—The friendship of *tengeneza*—A gramophone and a sonnet.

WHILE my companion was in the forests after elephant, I was leading a life which had little excitement, but infinite charm. I had no special desire to kill an elephant, and took out no licence to do so. I frankly admit I did not feel equal to the inevitable dangers: elephant-hunting in such conditions as were prevailing then near Meru is emphatically no work for a novice. My only hunting, therefore, during these days was far away in the opposite direction to the forest, and was directed solely towards providing the camp with meat; this is not a good district for general game, and beyond a specimen of the greater bustard, a magnificent bird measuring 8 feet 4 inches from tip to tip, I shot little.



"THE CREVIERE FUSTARD"



"THE TENTS ARE ALL PITCHED"

[See page 133]

Up to this point we had been oppressed with the fever of hunting; our time was so short that of necessity the hours of energy were desperately long. Each locality was noted for some particular species, which was finer there than elsewhere, or else met only there, so it naturally fell out that until we obtained a fair specimen we were unhappily spending long days, day after day, in its pursuit, and when we had obtained it we moved camp and began again after something else.

Now it is certain that to know the real charm of safari-life there must be no limit of time. One should be at complete liberty to spend days or weeks in a camp, to march only when the spirit moves, and to hunt just as much or as little as one pleases. There is such an infinite deal besides the hunting in this life, which the hurrying sportsman is so apt to miss. If he is intent only on the game and knows that he has but two or three days at most in a camp, he will go forth at dawn indeed, but he will have no eyes for the soft wonder of the sky, and cannot stop to breathe in the sweet freshness of the air, yet the African dawn is like few things in this world.

Once I remember leaving camp an hour before the dawn in order to reach a certain hill

132 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

in the first flush of sunrise. As we jogged across the plain, the east revealed itself as a great, white billow of mist in the first suffusion of the day, and then gradually became tinged with glowing light; in the west the pale moon drifted moodily down the clouds towards the tops of the hills, and an indescribable feeling of youth was in the air. I was riding to hunt, and not hunting, and so I had leisure for once to let my mind wander out among the unfolding beauties of Nature, and that memory is worth a host of trophies now.

This hour of dawn and the last cool hour of day are the times when Nature is most gracious; then the kudu and bushbuck and other shy animals come out from their retreats and browse in the open glades. It is not all peace, for as the dark sweeps down upon the land, the lion and the leopard rouse themselves from their lairs; the hours of the night are the hours of danger in the kingdom of the animals, and many a sudden tragedy will be enacted before the reappearance of the sun, but both the beginning and the end of night have a mysterious attraction of their own.

But for man, better than the dawn, better than the hours of marching, or of the hunt, better even than the hour of success, are the hours after dark. The porters have done their

day's work, the tents are all pitched, the loads piled, the *posho* cooking or eaten, the cry of "*kuni, kuni*" (wood, wood) from the askari superintending the building of the Bwanas' fire has died away, and ceaseless chatter or a chorused chant rises from the groups huddled round their many little fires: the Bwanas have done their day's hunting and draw up their chairs to the great fire built for them, pipes are lit, and each goes over to the other the incidents of his day. Half the enjoyment of a good hunt is drawn from those minutes, in which a friend leans forward with the light playing on his face and listens with understanding. On the other side of the fire stands the askari on duty, a silent silhouette, who will move seldom, and then only to send the sparks flying as he throws on another log. Presently the headman will approach for orders, or the guide to learn if camp is to be moved, and a little group will form and discuss.

One of the most striking groups we saw was just such a one. The subject was the plan of campaign against the elephant, and the six participants were of six different nationalities. My companion and myself represented the American and English, but the others soon grew so animated in their interest that we ceased to speak, and lay back in our chairs

watching the play of faces in the ring of fire-light. Elmi, the Somali, led the discussion, and Mabruki, the Wakamba, forgot in his excitement his exceeding hatred of all Somalis in general and this one in particular, and clutched him by the arm to illustrate his plan better; from the other side Kilangosi, the Masai, sitting in his red blanket, broke in with keenness none the less real because he retained his quiet dignity, and on the fourth side stood Abdulla Benadi, the Swahili askari, who lost his official silence, and sought eagerly for encouragement and recognition among the hunters; he assented to everything the others said, and laughed heartily whenever he thought laughter was demanded, but he knew not a thing about hunting, and none of the three gave the slightest indication that they even knew he was there. They ceased to talk of the morrow's plan, and fell to vivid general description of Tembo, the elephant, and even passed to imitation of his ways as they talked. The scene will glitter, like a crystal, in the memory long after many a hunt has been forgotten.

Such are the evening hours; often too we used to stroll round the camp, watching a crouching group by their fire, looking, perhaps, at a man who was ill, and stopping here and there to



"A CROUCHING GROUP BY THEIR FIRE"



"USED TO SHAVE EACH OTHER'S HEADS"

[See page 137]

talk. The men were a pleasant, happy band, and greeted us most cheerily with a chorus of "*Jambo, Bwana*" (Greeting, good morning, good evening, master). And then back at our own fire, if we were lucky and the night was glorious, as indeed it so often was, we could lean back and watch

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,

until only the necessity for an early start tore us away to our tent.

The life is big with one essential contrast. The Bwana is the general of a little army, the ruler, paymaster, judge, doctor, and friend of the body of men with him: he can with deeper truth than at almost any time in his life, even if he be a magnate, say unto one man, "Come," and he cometh, and unto another "Go," and he goeth—or if he does not, the hand of punishment is quick, heavy, and unquestioned. In no civilised community can a man receive such submission, a submission of the mind, be it noted, even more than of the body. He is served actually for money and meat, but the attitude which lays responsibility for all things on the Bwana is mental, not commercial. The black man does not think for himself; he expects his Bwana to do that for him. Leader

136 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

of a body of such men, the Bwana can look out from his camp and see not another soul: around him are his servants, fulfilling his lightest whim, and beyond is only Nature, and in this lies the contrast.

In one sense he is an absolute king, and in another he is as nothing. In some of the grander camps it is impossible to resist this secondary feeling of littleness. Few are such quiet teachers of humility as the plains, the forests, and the hills: to watch the drift of clouds across the open face of heaven, to hear in the far distance the lion's hunting-growl, or near-by the melancholy whimpering of the hyena, simply to be right away from all that one has known, away in the great spaces of the world, is to readjust one's whole outlook on life.

On safari the minutiae of time are lost; your watch is the sun, and goes from six to six with unvarying regularity all the year round; you hunt till you are weary, and eat when you return. Days of the week are things unknown, and a definite date strikes a jarring note; the weeks themselves are only measured by their sliding into months and the rise of another moon. Unconsciously, even if you are out only a comparatively short time, you begin to reckon in moons: the mind travels back

with a sudden surprise to the time that seems so far away when the last was at the full. Perhaps you sat and watched its slow course from a *boma*, perhaps you welcomed it as a friend to guide you back to camp. It is only in this life that you really know the moon.

Then apart from the contemplative, imaginative beauty, what infinite fun it is! Many men go on safari alone, but there is so much that can never be shared afterwards; there are many incidents which are tangible and can be held and given out again, but a hundred little jokes, as thin as air, born of the spirit of the hour and dying in the hour, are given to companions every day, and there are few with the peculiar mind that is able to laugh alone.

One of the more tangible pieces of merriment, which is yet nothing in the telling, was the hair-cutting extraordinary we brought ourselves to perform one day. Our boys used to shave each other's heads with bits of broken glass, but we never reached that comfortable and distinguished height. However, no one can go for many months unshorn; personal vanity may not produce the necessity, but the desire for coolness will. So one afternoon, when we were both taking it easy in camp, we turned to the barber's trade; we came to the conclusion that barbers were not sufficiently

admired, for their art is one of those things which look so easy till they are tried, and the ignoble expedient of cutting round a basin is a confession of inability.

We set to work manfully with comb and scissors in the approved style ; but either the hair wound itself round the comb and had to be jerked out, which the patient unaccountably resented, or else the scalp was always jutting up in front of the scissors. However, in the end by diligent snippings wherever a fair chance offered, we succeeded in executing two spirited representations of a wind-struck corn-field. Both complained bitterly of this final result, which it took several months' growth to efface, but we achieved the main end of coolness.

Another side of the life, the complement of the hunting, is the care of the trophies. Unless it rains daily, there should not be much difficulty, for in these altitudes the air is dry and at the same time the sun is hot. We found, however, that the method giving the best results was one used more in damp climates ; for a day after the skin or scalp had been removed, we covered it thickly with salt and alum, and wrapped it up to let the salt strike in. If skins are pegged out in the sun too soon, they are very apt to appear quite satisfactory, but to



"THE CASE OF THE TROPHIES"



"WITH SOME DIFFICULTY EXTRACTED IT" (ASMANIE WATCHING)

[See page 143]

lose their hair in a year or two's time. To all this a competent headman or a specially engaged skinner should give his daily attention, but it is far more satisfactory to attend to it one's self. Three Wakamba, signed on as ordinary porters and doing the carrying work of porters, though relieved from camp-work, were our skinners, and they used their knives with extraordinary care and skill; but they needed to be told what to do, and the fresh scalps to be looked at at intervals.

The only irremediable disaster was the loss of some oryx scalps: the bull oryx has great pads of protecting skin on his forequarters, and unless these are thinned right down, the preservative cannot get through to the hair: we gave instructions as to this, but the men fleshed them in the ordinary way, and some were not seen until too late. The same instructions apply to the skin supporting the zebra's mane. We had some trouble too with the ears of two rhino-scalps; all ears are difficult to skin really clean, and need careful watching at first. It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that a head to go on a wall should be divided down the spine, and a skin for a rug down the chest, and yet unless some one sees that the men understand this, a fine trophy may be spoilt in a very few minutes.

140 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

The docketing of trophies is another necessary job: unless this is done regularly as soon as they are ready, it is soon impossible to tell which skull belongs to which scalp and whose they are.

These sides of camp-life take time, but they are for the personal gratification of the sportsman, and he is the only loser if they are neglected: another side, which is at times very funny, but more often a positive burden, is one which is a duty owed to the men, and that is the side included in the expansive word *dawa* (medicine). The materials for cleaning the rifles, especially the ammonium sulphate for removing nickel-fouling, are *dawa*; the alum and salt are *dawa*, but that is just the paucity of the language. Every safari ought to have a complete medicine-chest; if the hunter does not need it himself, his men certainly will. They are always needing *dawa*; ailments are almost their hobby, and when the immense quantities of half-cooked meat they gulp down is considered, this is not surprising.

Far the most frequent scene would be this: up would come a boy, usually at the most inconvenient moment, such as when one was having a bath, murmuring "*Nataka dawa*" (I want medicine). He would be sent away to await the hour when all patients were being

treated, and then the following little dialogue would take place: "*Wapi?*" (where). "*Tumbo,*" he would reply, spreading his hand generally over the region wherein his last meal was causing trouble. He would then receive either a pill known as "a Livingstone rouser," or a dose of Epsom salts sufficient to worry a horse, or when they gave out a huge spoonful of castor-oil—mild treatment is wasted on a native's interior—and he would then yield place to the next patient.

They had a faith in our knowledge which was really touching, and would come to me if my companion were not in camp, though he alone knew anything about it, but it was easy enough in the ordinary case, though once when I received the expected reply of "*Tumbo,*" and began ladling out Epsom salts, the sufferer hurriedly stopped me, saying the other Bwana had given him that yesterday, and he now sought the opposite effect. All medical etiquette forbids a man to steal a patient from a rival practitioner, especially if he is already treating the actual case, so I told him to wait till the other Bwana returned.

The other common complaint was blood-poisoning. If the porters came at once, it would be easy enough, but they leave the thorn-stab or cut untended for several days,

142 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

and come for relief only when the pain grows bad. If we had reason to suspect an injury, we made the man come at the hour for treatment, but it is so hard to discover who needs it. We had several serious cases of blood-poisoning, and for a long time we feared that C. would have to amputate one man's foot if his life were to be saved: the poison runs up the leg into the body with terrible rapidity. The patient was the idiotic and useless askari, Abdulla Benadi: it is no slight sacrifice of time and trouble to cleanse and dress a foot thoroughly twice a day when on safari, but the man made a complete recovery, and offered us in return one of the only two instances of ingratitude we met on the whole trip. A few days after he was well he refused to deviate one inch from what he considered his askari's dignity to help us hurry up the start, and, as we were then near Meru, we paid him off then and there, much to his disgusted surprise: askaris are specially liable to fall into the error of thinking they are indispensable, whereas, as a rule, they are the most useless men in camp.

One of the most interesting scenes was that of the tooth-pulling. A boy came up and showed a very rotten tooth, which was causing him great pain, and my companion got out

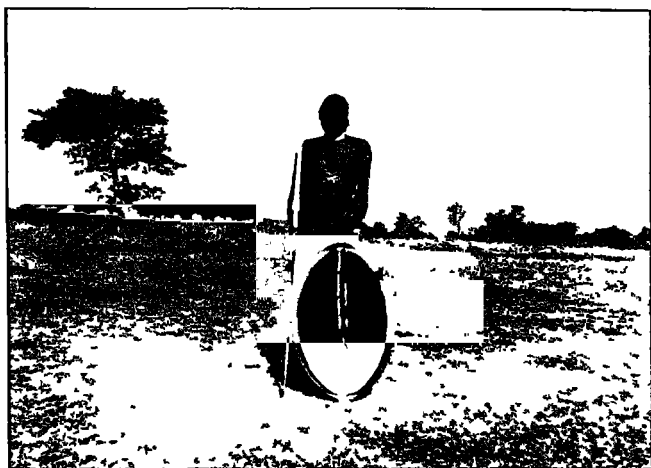
his forceps and with some difficulty extracted it. He turned round and saw a line of five or six men also waiting to have teeth extracted. It may have been the novelty which attracted them, but certain it is that, as we were only making an afternoon's march, he spent the greater part of that morning wrestling with teeth, till the space in front of our tent appeared to be strewn with them.

Besides such patients, there were a number of slight sunstrokes, two cases of an epileptic fit, one of sudden heart-failure through running at a great altitude, one accident as later described, and several serious complaints: these latter we handed over to the care of the native dispenser at the station we reached next after they had occurred, and, though at times many were on the sick-list and one or two ill beyond our knowledge, we had no deaths to record. How safaris without any medical knowledge at all manage it is difficult to say.

Yet in spite of the numerous applicants for *dawa*, the life is extraordinary healthy to those who take the least care of themselves, which no porter ever begins to do. We ranged to as high as 10,000 feet, and beyond an occasional dose of quinine as a precaution against fever after camping near such a swamp as Olbolossat, for example, we took no thought

of medicine for ourselves. We were not in the land of innumerable little ticks, which become, I believe, unbearable on the plains after the wet weather, though our dogs had to be picked daily for the larger, repulsive-looking ticks; we were not inflicted by the unrelenting invasion of white ants, and we escaped scot-free from "jiggers," a little burrower like a pin's head with the habit of laying a sac of eggs under the skin, causing horrible irritation, which grows serious if the sac is broken in its removal; at least I got two in my thumb, of all places, but that was only after our return to Nairobi. The flies in Masai-land worried us inconceivably, but that is inevitable, and we really had only one discomfort to put against *total immunity from noxious insects*.

C. awoke one night with a yell, exclaiming that a great, hairy caterpillar was among his blankets: for some time I paid no attention, and when I was finally roused, I laughed, whereupon he threatened to throw the thing at me if he could only find it, but the next morning, wherever its hairs had touched him, he had red marks and a swelling, his knee becoming nearly as large as his thigh: both passed in a day or two, however, and our comradeship was never subjected to such a test again.



"A WARRIOR OF THE MIU



"AT MIKU SOME MIUUS

There was another side-light to camp-life which deserves special mention, because I believe no one has ever taken the trouble to do it before. We carried round with us a recording phonograph and a number of blank records : though these were a constant anxiety, and many were broken, especially on the occasion when a rhino blundered through the safari, we were able to bring home songs from almost all the tribes with whom we came in contact. Some Masai speeches were obtained by Lord Delamere a few years ago, though all but one of these are reported to be broken now, but, as far as I have been able to ascertain, no songs are in existence. It meant time and trouble very often to persuade a warrior of the Meru, for instance, to sing into our machine, and others to join properly in the chorus, but the results amply repaid us, if only by the effect when they heard their voices again.

At Meru, too, some belles were induced to sing, but the eternal feminine was uppermost, and they kept breaking off every few seconds to giggle and cling shyly to one another for moral support. Never shall we forget the face of one old lady of Meru, who listened to the reproduction. Fear and curiosity struggled for the mastery in her expression ; she would not approach too near, and she was not going

to miss a syllable. Every now and then she would raise her hands in the well-known, deprecating way that old ladies have, and glance with amazement at us. She looked exactly as if she was seeing the devil and finding him a very interesting, if a very terrifying old gentleman, or like a real lover of scandal who is listening to a perfectly shocking piece of news that later she will revel in repeating. Her wrinkles and scanty attire increased the extraordinary humour of her face.

Most of the natives were not very curious, however. They were intensely amused and sang in time to the reproduction with delighted grins, but as for the rest, well, it was a piece of the Bwanas' magic, and that was enough. The Masai alone proved the keener intelligence of their race: they behaved as an uninstructed white man would have done, and peered about in perplexity to try and find out how their voices were reproduced. The best records we obtained were made by our own porters: they had seen and heard the instrument often enough to understand exactly what we required, and sang their tribal songs right through clearly and loudly till we cried "*Bass*" (enough). To an English ear those of the Kavirondo have the most tune and vivacity,

but the others have each a peculiar fascination of their own, and all are extraordinarily different ; those of the Masai, for example, are sung in a high, almost a falsetto voice.

It would be perhaps as well to mention here that, though all the tribes speak in their different tongues, a pigeon form of the dialect of the Swahilis has become the *lingua franca* of the East Coast. Some in every tribe are sure to know this, and it is exceedingly easy to acquire sufficient to give all the necessary orders : these are so limited in their extent and so recurring in their frequency that they soon fall unconsciously from one's lips, and are used in ordinary conversation with one's friend. There is no English substitute for some of the best words: *shauri* is a stand-by, but first of them all comes *tengeneza*.

This is a word which no beginner can praise too highly ; it is a veritable dictionary, a peerless good fellow and comrade among words ; it is one's prop, one's arm of strength in every emergency, and no safari can go a single day without it, for it means everything. It embraces with splendid impartiality meanings so opposite as "take down" and "put up" : its plain literal meaning is "tidy." "*Tengeza hema*" can mean, according to the circumstances, either "take down the tent," or "pitch the tent," or

"straighten the infernal mess into which the other Bwana has thrown the tent." Abdulla used the odd expression, "*piga hema*" (literally "shoot the tent") for the second of these, but we were invariably faithful to *tengeneza*: in fact C. always said that if I were to be killed the order would assuredly go forth to Kiboko to "*tengeneza* Bwana Barnes."

It is more difficult, though not really hard, to understand the men's replies to one's orders, but as they are usually long-winded excuses, they are seldom worth understanding, unless it be to show how utterly they fail to meet the case. Very few have even a smattering of English: my Abdulla was limited to "London," "number one," and "all right," which three useful pieces of information he was constantly bringing off with an unctuous sound as of sucking a sweet. Almost all, however, will grasp the fact that their Bwana is displeased about something if by chance he should say "damn."

Besides our recording phonograph we had, following the custom of nearly every East African home, a gramophone: in a land where to hear good music is next door to impossible, these abound. Ours happened to be a good one with a number of first-class records, though both suffered from the bumps of safari, and, in

spite of the patriotic preference of the natives for the songs of their own tribes, the more intelligent greatly appreciated some of the European singers. A laughing song by Harry Lauder invariably made those who heard it laugh also in uncomprehending but infectious mirth, while Kilangosi had a way of drawing near if we played two, Gounod's Ave Maria and Jocelyn's Berceuse, in which the great Russian soprano, Madame Michailowa, sang and at the end would say, "*Msuri sana*" (very good).

It was so odd an effect to hear these notes rising up in a scene so foreign to the land of their birth, that they were responsible for the production of the following sonnet :—

TO A GRAMOPHONE IN AN AFRICAN CAMP

Thou casket of the disembodied sound,
The aspiring mind of man has never trod
A pathway leading nearer unto God,
The Life-Creator, than when thou wast found.
Death shall no more the cup of silence bring
To lips of mighty singer, and no more
Great actor pass, but from the further shore
To unborn listeners shall they play and sing.
A voice now sleeps within thee, never heard
Save in a land from this scene far removed ;
Hark ! It awakes, and, like unfettered bird,
Soars o'er the camp, till from its melody
Floats down the wordless longing for things loved
And English hearts are strangely near to me.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM MERU TO EMBU *VIA* NYERI

Kenia and the clouds—Heart v. height—A glorious ride—"Let good digestion wait on—elephant"—Kilangosi leaves us—On the way in to Nyeri—Untidy safaris—Indians and an auction—The use of wives—Variety on the road—A shocking sight—Karanja's hospitality—A formal call.

As soon as the skinners had done their work on the big elephant's scalp and feet, which gave all our seven or eight Wakamba a long day's work even after they had been brought in, we moved camp, and started along the rough track that leads round the western slopes of Kenya to Nyeri. Our original plan had been to go straight to Embu from Meru, thus making a complete circuit of the mountain, but we learned that this road would lead us through an almost unbroken succession of Kikuyu *shambas*, which would be dull and devoid of game. The route along the east of Kenya is said to be very fine, but it is indeed a country of inexhaustible natural beauty if it can provide two routes as fine as that on which our march was now set. There can be few rides in the world to equal this.

Meru is north-east and Nyeri is south-west of Kenia, so that the track bears first to the west and then bends south along the lofty slopes of the mountain. The first camp we made was on a little stream of the Maranya, some 9,500 feet up. One is close to the actual mountain here ; hard by begin the great belts of forest, and above them at a little over 14,000 feet is the snow-line, from which again rise the ribbed and rocky peaks, the grandest of which towers nearly 19,000 feet in solitary majesty into the sky. We had not seen Kenia since we descended from the plateau of the Aberdares, but she gave herself just once to us now.

We left our camp on the Maranya in the bitterly cold daybreak, and, while the safari followed the trail, we struck off to the right and climbed a steep hill, till we stood as nearly as possible at an altitude of 10,000 feet. From the summit of this we watched for a full hour the dazzling sight revealed to us, while our boys sat with their backs to us and the mountain, wondering at the eccentricities of their Bwanas.

Not twenty miles away across the valley rose clear and sublime into the blue sky the snowy crags of Kenia, and as we watched, the little fleecy clouds, like puffs from a cannon, came floating out of nowhere towards her, and, gathering like a halo of dancing elves about

her brow, gradually settled to rest upon her and enveloped her from view. She was never the same for five minutes together, and the marvellous beauty of her robing in the clouds was a sight never to be forgotten. Nor was Kenia alone all the beauty; to our right lay the stretching slope of plain, on which we could make out the pigmy form of the safari far below us, and to the left and behind us was a vast sea of mist, through which the tops of the hills appeared, like rocks lashed by the driven spray. Kenia was gone, and we took the road again before the hill on which we stood was also cloaked by those rising waves; but the whole was a scene to make one catch one's breath in sheer wonderment, and to entrance the memory for ever.

The altitude, however, had one serious drawback; the heart of natives other than those of the locality is easily affected by the rarefied air. When the Duke of Abruzzi climbed the Ruwenzori, he took Swiss porters for the actual climb, and now we had several cases for the doctor. Punda Melia, our hardest worker, being of the Kavirondo, who live on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza at less than 3,000 feet, pitched headlong and lay like a log on running forward with some order to the head of the line, and was only pulled



SOME OF THE GREAT, MOSS HUNG TREES (NOTICE MULE
AND RIDER AT BASE)



"THE HEAD OF THE TUNEL"

through with very much trouble, brandy, and an injection of strychnine; and Asmanie, of the Swahili of the coast, and others were only able to come along slowly, such as were porters being relieved of their loads. Even Nyeri is between six and seven thousand feet up, and they did not entirely recover until we were encamped near Embu.

We saw no game until we were approaching Nyeri, and few even of the great Masai herds, but he would be a strange man who could not draw complete happiness from such a ride alone. We were skirting the densely wooded slopes of Kenia, on whom after that one glorious hour the clouds rested day after day in sullen possession, and on our right for miles and miles, in a graduated fall to the distant Guaso Nyiro, stretched the mighty plain. The sense of openness and freedom was unsurpassable, and the keen splendour of the mountain air, as it sang past our faces, brought to us a feeling of the divine. We used to leave the creeping safari and even our gunboys, and go cantering on for miles, just my companion and I together. As Shelley wrote:—

“This ride was my delight. I love all waste
And solitary places, where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless as we wish our souls to be:

.

154 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

So, as we rode, we talked ; and the swift thought,
Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,
But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours
Charged with light memories of remembered hours."

There are better things than hunting, and this was of the best.

The only thorn was that we had to live for several days on the tongue and part of the trunk of the elephant. These are supposed to be the best, but, if they are, no honest salesman could say much about the rest. Perhaps, however, we Europeans are fastidious, for our boys ate every piece they could get hold of with great relish, and one Kikuyu, finding a rib that somebody had not properly cleaned up lying about camp, proceeded to fortify himself against the hungers of the day's march with evident appreciation. People say baked foot is a delicacy, but it seemed to us that the elephant, even when dead, is deserving of respect ; to eat him is an insult which requires necessity and a stout digestion ; he is perfectly good, but excessively stringy and tough. We did our best to get the better of him by making Amisi put him in the mincer ; but even that wasn't a success, and the change, when we got it on approaching Nyeri, to a young Tommy was a revelation.

A few days along this route we had a sad



"PROCEEDED TO FORTH A HIMSELF AGAINST THE HUNGLES" (TAKEN AT LAKE GUNGA)

reminder that our time was drawing to an end; we were now on a regular track, and Kilangosi wished to leave us and strike across to his house near Rumuruti. It was the first separation, and one of real, and, I believe, of mutual regret. He parted with his spear to C., saying he would have yielded it to no one else, for he had speared a lion with it: his personal friends among our boys gave a small dance round one of their little fires in his honour, and early next morning he swung off homewards with the tireless stride that had borne him so many miles at the head of our safari. He was a man who, no matter in what company he had been placed, would have carried himself with a quiet and courteous dignity.

On our way in to Nyeri we passed a doctor and his wife going to the most northerly post of Marsabit; and this little instance of the fact that the Englishwoman goes over the world with her husband, and makes a home of the most solitary station, struck my American companion most forcibly. He thought that in his country the tendency would be for public opinion to approve rather of the husband's surrender of his work than of the fellow-journeying of the wife. We met also a little party about to make their way up to the snow-line of Kenia, not for the grandeur, but, as one

of them had the unusual candour to confess, "just to say they'd done it."

In Nyeri we had a staggering illustration of the peculiarities of the English temperament ; we met an Englishman near the government offices, and were preparing to enter into civilities with him, when he walked straight by as if he were passing through a Bond Street crowd. This was, perhaps, perfectly natural ; he had not been introduced to us, but it was a little disconcerting after having seen no other white face, except those of two parties just mentioned and Mr. Horne, for nearly two months. Once in a still more outlying part we passed a surveyor sitting in his tent : he did not even look up from the newspaper he was reading ; and there were other instances.

Following on this we had a little verbal skirmish with the man of authority in Nyeri. His just pride in the trim lawns of his beautiful station, which lies in the hills and is girdled by the mists, made him assume without question that all safaris came through with the fixed resolve to be untidy ; but it is not difficult to appreciate how exasperating the continual camping and passing of large bodies of men must be. Hosts of safaris come through Nyeri at certain times of the year, and this was one of the natural consequences.

Here, too, we discovered how funny the unpromising subject of the Indian storekeeper can be made. The Hindi-man, as the native calls him, is a wonderful and absolutely shameless cheat. You scrutinise the bill he first presents, and light on a piece of dishonesty, which you point out to him; his depreciatory smile seems to say "Yes, you have found me out there; good for you." You send him away to correct it; he returns with it, probably at the last possible moment, when every one is in a hurry to be starting, in the hope that you will just glance through it and pay. Look well, though; there is almost sure to be another deception. Even if the bill is correct, the weights may not be: we found a 60 lb. bag of *posho* decrease to as little as 45 when weighed in our presence. Watch, or at least see that your headman watches, the weighing, lest *posho* run short at a time when you are some distance from stores, and, remembering the Somali's cousin, it is better to watch yourself.

Returning here at Nyeri from the errand of converting a cheque into rupees at the government office, I found C. trying to retain his countenance as he held an auction. Our custom was up for sale, and the two rival Hindi storekeepers were the bidders. Like all Hindi-men, they had no idea of trusting one another

and agreeing upon a price below which neither would sell, and now they were coming steadily down in their efforts to undercut the other. We gave the order to the one who made the lower tender for each separate article, and bought at a ridiculously low figure in consequence. Very soon all idea of making a profit vanished from the Hindi-men's minds; their whole object was to wrest the bid from the other, and if we had had an enormous safari the one eventually successful would have been a ruined man. Many of our boys gathered round grinning with delight as the price sank by half-rupees and then literally by cents; and when it was all over, the smaller of the two bidders, a leery little cuss like a London street-arab, drew near and said in a confidential undertone, smiling gleefully at his own unfathomable guile and twisting himself into odd positions at the thought of it, "Other man no good; he has old beans and bad *posho*; now I have good."

At Nyeri, too, we engaged a number of new porters, and an amusing light was thrown on the status of wives. A number of women presented themselves for employment, but in a camp of men these introduce obvious complications, and we issued orders to our headman that none were to be engaged. We had gone a few miles out from Nyeri when we noticed



'NATURAL RAPIDS IN THE RIVER'

[See p. 150]



"CARRYING HUGE LOGS FOR HOUSE-BUILDING"

five or six women carrying our loads among the safari. We called up our headman and asked the meaning of this disobedience. "Oh," he said, "those are just wives carrying their husbands' loads one stage of the journey." The Kikuyu women do almost all the heavy work, and we passed numbers on this road staggering along with great loads of firewood on their backs, often with a husband idling along beside them. In the accompanying photograph they are carrying huge logs for house-building, but a man has been good enough to do the same.

One old Kikuyu we paid off in Nyeri, on account of sickness, gave us a delightful instance of the different way in which the same thing may strike two people. He came up just as we were starting off, and asked us to give him a blanket ; he had had one of course at first, but it had been lost or stolen. He was old and had been ill, so we gave him an old one, and thought we had been rather generous. Not so the old man : he was perfectly wild with rage, scowled furiously at us, and had the indelicacy to point out a hole or two before going off with it muttering to himself. He had clearly never heard of the proverb about looking a gift-horse in the mouth.

160 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

The ride from Nyeri to Embu is one of both beauty and interest, but it is of an entirely different character to the one we had just completed. That is all open plain and mighty mountain ; this lies through prosperous Kikuyu *shambas* the whole way till within a few miles of Embu. There is nothing to shoot, and the traveller from the north feels the hand of civilisation closing down upon him ; for the road is a road, though often bad and exceedingly hilly, and not just a rough track through the grass, uncounted centuries old. But it is a new side of the country, and there is an unending supply of people and things to interest and to charm.

You pass some Kikuyu women working in the fields, or stop and bargain with a warrior for his spear or sword ; better do this, by the way, in an outlying station like Meru, for the price ascends by leaps and bounds the nearer you approach Nairobi, and in Nairobi itself you will be asked fifteen or eighteen rupees for a spear you can buy for four or five on the road. You watch the sword in process of manufacture in a little hut, buy a section of sugar-cane to suck, or roast some Mahindi corn-cobs by the roadside. The best of all our meals was one taken during this day's march, with a piece of Tommy as the central attraction.



"SOME KIKUYU WOMEN WORKING IN THE FIELDS"



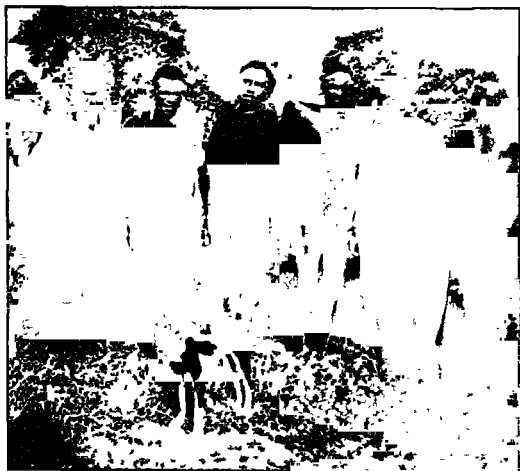
"A LITTLE HUI"

Soon after leaving Nyeri we had to cross the deepest stream we encountered at all ; the safari went by a log-bridge, but the horse and mule could not, and we just succeeded in getting them across, half-wading and half-swimming, without their being washed down : the dogs followed us, and one of us had to go on and wait to catch them some way down the stream, in which there luckily did not appear to be crocodiles. There is plenty of incident on the Nyeri-Embu road.

Too much incident, perhaps ; for on the second day we came on a shocking sight. We were on ahead of our boys and the safari, when round a corner there suddenly lay before us in the very centre of the road a dark, still figure. It was the emaciated body of a girl of about eighteen. She had not been dead, as far as we could judge, more than a couple of hours, and had apparently crawled out of the neighbouring bushes, in which we found her clothes, and died of starvation in the road. When our boys came up, they would not approach, and we hid her from view of passers-by ourselves ; then after some search we found a most scoundrelly looking old man, and drew his attention to the death. He was not interested ; he seemed to us to know all about it, and he regarded us evilly, with no other idea

in his head but to make himself scarce at the first opportunity. We had him brought back on his first sliding away, while we considered what we could do, but when he moved off again in a different direction we let him go. There was nothing to be done: the Kikuyu are notorious for the callous way in which they carry out their dead, and even their dying, to prevent their death polluting the hut, in which case it would have to be burnt, and their only undertaker is the hyena; but to have such an instance on the public road was rather too much of a bad thing.

The two camping-grounds on this road also provided plenty of interest. Through these *shambas*, where a safari cannot cut the wood it needs for fires, the government has entered into a contract with the Kikuyu chief of each district to supply loads of wood at a reasonable rate at the fixed camping-grounds. At the first we met a little safari from the Public Works Department and a villainous old chief, who was far too occupied with taking a fancy to certain of the white men's belongings to bother about such a trifle as the bringing in of wood. He greatly admired a leopard's skin-rug one of the other party had on his camp-bed, and, when his designs on this were frustrated by a bland ignoring of his broadest



"KARANJA . . . ATTENDED US WITH HIS SUB-CHIEFS"



"THE THICK FRINGE OF BRUSH ALONG THE RIVER"

[See page 169]

hints, he thought he would like my helmet, and I was only just in time to rescue it without much ceremony as it was descending upon his head. He was a very wealthy and powerful old chief, and accustomed to take what he wanted.

At the second camp the big chief was aged, and Karanja, his son, attended us with his sub-chiefs. He was a splendid, athletic young man, and extremely hospitable; in fact we were soon exchanging gifts like the old Homeric heroes. It is true that we had to be careful not to admire too extensively, for whatever we did, he promptly took from its lawful owner and gave to us, but that was his right, and he meant very well. In return for Mahindi corn-cobs, which we all ate together, woven baskets and other articles, we gave him a shaving-soap tin, greatly appreciated as a snuff-box, and an imposing medal my companion was wearing as a watch-guard, bearing the inscription "The hall-mark of Chewing-Gum Excellence." With this he was immensely pleased, as it came direct from the white man's watch, and was therefore of great value, and C. fastened it on to his neck-chain as a Pope might dignify a Cardinal. These little acts of courtesy, however, were but the prelude to the offering of the crown of hospitality.

Other white men had doubtless exchanged gifts with him, but none had ever encouraged him to sing—and not that alone, but also enabled him to hear himself sing: we persuaded him to render a song for the benefit of our recording phonograph, and when he had done this with an inimitable air of condescension, in which pride played no little share, we reproduced his song. He had an extremely bad voice, but he was perfectly delighted, and all his tactful sub-chiefs said they were delighted too; and so before he left us for the night he inquired if we would like a *nwana mke* (woman), and even produced for our inspection and approval a plump and well-oiled damsel. By Kikuyu usage the chiefs have the absolute disposal of all the unmarried girls, but we have been told since that to offer them to a white man is most unusual. We refused the honour with profuse expressions of gratitude, and, though Karanja was evidently rather disappointed in us, he shortly afterwards departed in very good humour.

Late that night the chief of the next district, who happened to be passing that way and heard that two white men were there, came to pay us a formal visit. Behind him walked some of his men, one of whom carried a deck-chair: after the inevitable handshaking, this

was set by our fire, and with few words, for we had learnt no Kikuyu, he sat stolidly there for five or ten minutes; then he arose, shook hands, and departed with his men and his chair. It was a close copy of an uncomfortable London call.

Early on the third day we left the cultivated *shambas* and passed into the uninhabited plains near Embu, where buffalo are to be found in countless numbers.

CHAPTER IX

M'BOGO, THE BUFFALO

The difficulties of long grass—The buffalo wins a trick—Unnecessary nerves—Religion spoils a feast—Vindictive beasts—The interest of swaying grass—Rhino—An egg-buying interlude—The art of tree-climbing—A fiery success—The buffalo gives his version.

SOME years ago the scourge of the rinderpest played fearful havoc with the herds of buffalo, a beast who goes in Swahili by the sonorous name of M'bogo, but they have been increasing considerably again of late. In Uganda they have been taken off the protected list and classified as vermin: in British East Africa a sportsman's licence has been extended to allow of two bulls instead of one. In the neighbourhood of Embu, in which we now were, we came upon fresh tracks every day, and almost always succeeded in approaching close to the herd which had made them; at a favourable time of year it would seem to be next door to impossible to hunt them long here without securing two fine specimens of what is probably the most splendid trophy in the world.

Probably we ought to have succeeded better than we did, but except in a limited area, from which the buffalo with their usual sagacity departed at the very first sign of a visiting enemy, at this time, the middle of September, the grass was so high that hunting them in it was certainly a most thrilling, but at the same time a most dangerous, and, which was more, an exceedingly unsatisfactory proceeding. It would have been as easy as could be to shoot buffalo, but to shoot a fine, old bull was quite another matter. Cows are absolutely protected in East Africa, and anyway no one wants a cow; its horns are comparatively insignificant, and it lacks the outstanding feature of the bull, a massive horn-plate across the brows. In an old bull the two sides of this join almost entirely, the hair disappears, and the spread of the mighty horns increases, but a young bull, while moving in the grass and amongst the herd, is by no means easy to distinguish from a cow. To pick and choose in long grass is, apart from all question of danger, fraught with much difficulty. The chances are overwhelming that long before one has marked down the head desired, some straying cow will make a discovery, which sends the whole herd off with a heavy roll of thundering hoofs: the elephant and the rhino have only the senses of hearing

and smell to protect them ; the buffalo is keen-sighted as well. Then again, it is one thing to mark down the big bull, and another to get a shot at him.

On the first day I found a great herd, numbering over a hundred buffalo, out on the shorter grass of the plain. It reached about to our knees, and was ideal to stalk in : we made no less than three stalks, each of which brought us within easy shot, but twice a cow, wandering out of the rear of the herd, saw us before I had had a chance of firing at the bull I wanted, and the third time I foolishly risked a hasty snap, and the herd cleared for miles, nor did we ever see it again. I could have shot a fair bull to a certainty the second time, but in that herd were two colossal heads, and I waited and hoped. This chance was ruined by the number of the buffalo, and it became evident with further hunting that almost all in the neighbourhood had buried themselves in the high grass on the opposite side of the Embu-Fort Hall road. Some few others we found still in the shorter grass, and my companion shot his two, but the necessity for shooting them as the chance offered prevented his obtaining a really fine head.

The day after that first fiasco, and shortly before we followed the buffalo across the road,



"IN LONG GRASS"



"IT REACHED ABOUT TO OUR KNEES"

proceedings were enlivened by the only accident of the trip and a very narrow escape from death. After many hours of tracking, Elmi, the Somali, who was carrying my heavy rifle, and I came on a small herd. They had our wind, however, and made straight for the thick fringe of brush along the river; following on, we almost stumbled on them round a sharp corner, and they plunged right into it. To enter was a useless seeking after danger; whatever they did, whether they crashed away or on to us, it would be impossible to pick a head. We clambered, therefore, on to a great mass of rock overlooking the brush and waited; we could hear the great beasts breaking along below us and see the sway of the leaves. I shot at two old bulls as they showed for a moment crossing from one dense patch to another, but am convinced I missed each time. Then, as they seemed to be edging along to the end of the covert, Elmi and I moved to the end and posted ourselves a little above on the slope, waiting for them to break out. This they did, but unexpectedly far below by the water's edge, and to fire was almost certainly only to wound.

Hoping, however, that one of the big bulls was yet to come, we moved down and stood with the brush on our left, which was never-

110 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

theless protected by a cairn of stones, the river in front of us, and great clumps of grass on our right. Not a sound disturbed the stillness, and the buffalo is a very noisy beast; it seemed clear that our hopes were vain, so after listening intently for several minutes, as it was late in the day, I said we would return to camp, slung my rifle up on my shoulder, and turned up the hill. Elmi lingered a moment for a last look round, and I had gone about six paces from him, when, with a crash, the bushes just by me parted, and I saw with what can only be described as a lightning-flash of utter dismay a huge bull-buffalo with lowered head not a yard away. I leapt back, unslinging my rifle desperately as I did so, caught my heels on a tuft, and fell. This probably saved me, for the buffalo lost sight of me for a moment, and out of the corner of his eye saw the Somali. He swerved sharply down the hill, and I was just in time as I sprang to my feet to see him disappearing in the grass; the whole thing was over almost before the fact that it had happened could be realised.

A high clump hid Elmi from me, and behind it was an ominous silence. I jumped round it and found him lying in a crumpled heap. He lay so still that I thought he was killed, and his eye when I touched it was glassy, but, as it

turned out, he was far less seriously hurt than seemed possible. It was bad enough, for he had a shoulder and a rib broken, but we had him carried in on a litter into Embu, and a mission doctor and the native dispenser tended him with such success that in under a fortnight he was about again and making his way into Nairobi. The buffalo had hurled Elmi in front of him with a blow on the shoulder, given him one vicious pound with his massive horn-plate as he lay, and then with unchecked speed passed on and vanished in the grass.

This accident shows the devilish cunning of these powerful brutes: when once they have a man down, their habit is to pound or stamp him to fragments, and few people are merely mauled by them, but in this case instinct undoubtedly told him that, if he had stayed, though he would have killed his enemy, he would certainly have been killed himself: had either of us been alone, the story would have had a gruesome ending. Also we inspected the place carefully afterwards, and it was clear from the tracks that that buffalo had deliberately hunted us. Possibly one of my shots had struck him, though he had little of the wounded about him; at any rate he was out for blood, and must have stood like a statue in the corner of the brush waiting his chance. Why he did

not charge when he first saw us pass down together in front of him is a mystery : if he had, he would have almost inevitably have killed us both. Even as it was, it was a miraculous escape, for he came and went like a destructive flash of lightning.

During the next few days I took Elmi into Embu and saw to his disposal there, a task in which, as there is no native hospital there, I was most generously assisted by the District Commissioner, Mr. Kenyon-Slaney, whilst C., whose chances at buffalo had not been good hitherto, shot his two, and was also fortunate enough to run across a band of lions. He was following a bunch of buffalo in brush and grass : they suspected his presence, and as they scattered, seven lions, which had evidently been watching them, followed. C. got a snapshot at one of them as it crossed a path in the brush : he went in and fired one more shot, but the other lions stayed about, and he thought it best to wait and follow it up in the morning, so we entered the brush together after it next day.

There can be few more tense moments than those, in which step by step, eye and ear on the strain, and guns ready for an instant shot, an advance is made after such a beast as a wounded lion : now, however, our nerves were wrung unnecessarily, for, in a few minutes, we





"IT . . . HAD BEEN DEAD FOR MANY HOURS"



"CAMP WAS LIKE A BUTCHER'S SHOP"

came on it lying dead under a great, overshadowing tree. It had been shot fairly on the shoulder, and had been dead for many hours. We found close to it curious splatterings on the grass, which we at first took to be the beginning of another blood-trail, till Mabruki, with a supercilious air at our expectations, pointed out that they were the droppings from a red-berried tree.

The two buffalo my companion had shot lay close together, and we moved camp near to them, with the result that camp was like a butcher's shop that evening: every little fire had innumerable strips of meat on sticks in front of it, and every branch in the neighbourhood was laden with the uncooked remainder. It was all gone in a day or two, and then followed the resultant pains and *dawa*. The bulk of the men were as delighted as children, not only over the abundance of meat, but also in a disinterested way over the death of a lion and two buffalo; that reflected credit upon the safari, and therefore did they feast merrily, but in the midst of all this gluttonous jubilation, the poor Mohammedans, numbering five or six, sat in gloomy, irreligious thoughts: camp held no meat from a beast which had been *hallalled* and made lawful for them, for no one ever yet, unless openly tired of life, cut a buffalo's throat

174 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

as it lay dying, and so they went meatless to bed.

The Wakamba, who are all hunters, had been despatched in many directions to discover where the buffalo had gone, and now reported that all tracks led into the high grass on the other side of the road, that is, the right side proceeding towards Fort Hall from Embu. They also reported a tragedy. Mr. Kenyon-Slaney had told me that the accident to Elmi was the first occasioned by buffalo of which he had heard near Embu, but the very next day a Kikuyu girl, out gathering wood, startled a slumbering herd and was trampled to death. It would seem to be the general experience, and ours, such as it was, confirms this, that buffalo will not charge in a mass deliberately; the danger in the long grass is that they will blunder right over one, and a squadron of cavalry would be easier to stem than a frightened, thundering herd. Again and again in the days that followed we were within ten or fifteen yards of buffalo, then a treacherous puff of wind or a crackle of grass would give the alarm, and the unseen mass would go thundering away; but the strain was great, because it was impossible to tell in which direction they were going. Often we tore to a little rise that we might at least see them

a few yards away. The hunting was not only dangerous; it was also invariably unsatisfactory, since no shot was possible; but it was my last chance, and C., having secured his heads, came with me as a covering gun. In such a case the companionship, to say nothing of the moral and actual support, made the long days of ill-success far lighter, but ordinarily to hunt in pairs is fatal; one is sure to spoil the chances of the other, or, if both are unselfish, the chances will be let slip.

On one of these days Mabruki informed us of a piece of vindictiveness on the part of these great brutes, which I give for what it is worth. In a place where the bushes were very thick we came on a dead bushbuck; it had been struck on the haunch by some heavy object, and crawled in there to die. He said it had evidently got in the way of a buffalo and received a savage pound, and, though the bushbuck is so shy and agile a creature that we accepted this explanation with hesitation, it was at any rate consistent with the facts before us.

A danger more easy to realise than an impetuous, startled mass of buffalo, breaking over one through the wall of grass like the crest of a curling wave, is supplied by the rhino. The grass was at times as much as

176 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

14 feet high, and more than once we came to an abrupt halt as we followed single file along the trail at the sound of a rhino moving uneasily close to us; sometimes where the grass was not of a consistent height we could see the black head just showing, as the great stupidity meditated on the intrusion into its domain.

Creeping along a trail in these conditions is a wonderful education; throughout the day the senses are kept intensely on the *qui vive*. A long stem of grass sways ahead and rivets the attention; more often than not its movement is caused only by a little bird which has alighted on it, but it may be swaying to the twitch of a rhino's restless ears. Though the birds in this matter are false alarmists, they are also sure instructors to tell one of the invisible danger. Once we should have stumbled right on to a reposing herd of buffalo, but for Mabruki's eyes. The disturbed fluttering of the little birds told a story to him, though to the less experienced it seemed nothing unusual, and as he had been grouchy all day we were inclined to believe his positive assertion to be merely a ruse to induce us to sit down and wait, but he was perfectly correct, and a herd was concealed in the grass in front of us.

Once we came suddenly on a rhino watching us intently some twenty yards away: little

more than its ears were visible, and our line came to a halt as if turned to stone, and so we all stood, guns ready for an immediate shot, for several minutes. It was getting tedious; the rhino, having no pressing engagement elsewhere, seemed disposed to stand there for hours: we might have tried a slow retreat, but we wanted to pursue the trail we were on, so finally we shouted at it, whereupon it wheeled sharply and disappeared. On another occasion a similar beginning was made, but this rhino was not content with motionless curiosity, and started forward to investigate. His horns showed for an instant and were of very fair length, and as I wanted a second one I fired for the base of his ear. He sank out of sight, and our boys cried "*ku fa*" (dead), but we had no leisure to look for him: buffalo had been unexpectedly near, and the shot sent them thundering off, seemingly in every direction, and for a moment the possibility of their appearance engaged our whole attention.

The sound, however, passed without danger, and we looked again for the rhino: to our surprise he was up and making off in a dazed fashion. Fearing I should lose him, my companion put two shots from his .405 in his stern; he turned, and a second shot from my heavy rifle knocked him down again. Through

the grass came his stertorous breathing, and we approached with caution, for we could see nothing till he got on his feet again, when a shot fair on the point of the shoulder ended him, as he seemed about to try a charge. We had been told that, when once a rhino was down, it was all over with him; this incident was in striking disproof, and shows his immense vitality, for no shot was wide of its mark, though the first two had just missed the brain and spine respectively; it shows, too, how different a rhino is in such conditions from on an open plain, for he was never more than thirty or forty yards from us, and could only be seen at intervals in the grass.

One of the most comical interludes in these strenuous days was the scene of egg-buying one day on the road: we were short of meat, and, meeting a boy with a basketful of eggs, set ourselves to bargain for them. Our gun-boys soon assumed control of the *shauri*, and my Abdulla was especially important: he sat himself down with the boy beside him, and went through some extraordinary facial contortions in the rôle of egg-tester. His method was to grasp the egg by the extreme edge of his hand, and then squint at the light through it. Whether he was more successful in testing the eggs which he bought for himself is un-



'A SHOI INDID HIM



"ABDULLA . . . IN THE ROLE OF FCG TRSTER"

certain, but in about half of those he passed for us the chicken was almost at the wriggling point.

It was the day after this that he ended his career as a gunboy, and settled to rest as an askari, for which he was naturally fitted. Instead of him we promoted a very fine-looking Wakamba, by name Morabo, who inherited to the full the hunting instincts of his tribe, and at the very first essay proved infinitely superior both on the trail and as a stand-by with the second gun; in fact, once when we came suddenly on buffalo in the grass and I was carrying my .360, I found him instantly and without flurry thrusting my heavy rifle into my hands, as if he had been a gunboy all his life.

Having now been among buffalo so often without success, we tried a new plan of campaign. On finding a trail, we followed it until, as far as we could judge, the buffalo were just ahead of us. Oweru, our little Hermes, climbed like a cat, and was taken with us for that accomplishment, for, though braver than most Kikuyu, he was not entirely dependable; he led the two dogs in the rear, and surveyed the prospect from the tops of trees. When he reported buffalo ahead, he was left behind and the rest of us made a slow stalk to the tree nearest to them; up this we went, and watched

and hoped for a chance at the biggest bull. At first this climbing was a fruitful source of jest; comparisons were freely made to rhino gracefully and silently shinning up a tree, but it needs practice to get on to a lofty bough without disturbing the wary beasts near-by, and no one who has not tried it can have any idea of the cleverness of a rifle-barrel. The rifle must be slung round one, for both hands are needed, and, just as one swings up, the barrel wedges firmly under a bough; removed from there, it catches more firmly behind the next, and so on all the way up.

And yet with a little more time this method would have certainly proved successful; it was sheer ill-luck and a touch of bad shooting that caused it to fail in our case, for one day a large herd we were watching were disturbed by some sound on the further side, and actually came towards the tree in which we were. For no reason, however, except mental obliquity, they came in a wheeling circle, and were only visible for shooting purposes on the opposite side to that on which they had been expected. The situation was pure comedy for an on-looker, and simply maddening for the performer. To shoot from a tree needs a steady seat; no one can possibly aim and hold on at the same time. I scrambled round on a shaky

bough, and tried to wedge myself in a new position, whilst the whole herd stopped not twenty yards away, trying to make out what the deuce was the matter with the tree. They soon decided, however, that its queer fruit boded no good for them, and were disappearing in the grass when, in desperation at such a golden opportunity slipping, I fired. To balance in contortions in the attempt to see through branches is a monkey's art; I all but fell out of the tree, and of course missed completely. Still, those tree-experiences are grand memories; though the bull, for which we hoped, was of a retiring nature, we watched, sometimes for hours, the long, black backs in the grass and made an exhaustive study of cows: unluckily for such hunting and climbing, we discarded cameras, for we had the chance to take many fine and unusual photographs.

The end of our buffalo-hunting was most dramatic: on the last day we had to hunt, and in almost the last hour of the last day, I was able to secure not a great head, but at least a fair specimen of a splendid beast. The trail we struck early in the morning led back to the shorter grass, and our hopes rose high, but our admiration for the buffalo was well grounded, and three hours of tracking led us straight to a clump of thick brush. To enter was to

scare as before: we hid ourselves, and waited for them to come out into the open. This the inevitable cows did fearlessly, but the two fair bulls of the herd only just let us see they were there, and remained in the clump. About three o'clock the whole herd, apparently divining danger, left the clump on the far side, and disappeared over the crest of the hill. On following, we found to our disgust that they had merely crossed to an even denser clump; but time was getting short, and we resorted to an unusual expedient.

At this season of the year the natives always burn off the grass: they had begun to do so already, and fires were everywhere: we knew we could do no harm by having one on our own account. Kiboko was sent to windward of the clump, and presently the result of his handiwork was seen in a little ring of fires with growing range and rolling smoke. We posted ourselves just above where we expected the buffalo to break, but presently we saw them, a grand sight through the smoke, making their way along the lower edge. We ran at top speed to some rocks commanding the defile at the end: right below us, huddled together in the trees, were the buffalo. We feared they would slip by in the smoke, and shouted. Suddenly startled, they raced out,

not as expected from the fire, but from us. They knew all about grass-fires, and, circling easily round it, disappeared from view, but before they did so, the larger bull was raked right through. After such great animals as eland and buffalo, we always used hard-nosed bullets; we found the soft-nosed unsatisfactory against beasts, soft-skinned indeed, but so heavy of bone as to make it very probable that the soft-nosed would be shattered, and but for this it is certain that the bull would have gone for miles. We waited till the fire and curling clouds of smoke had swept past our rocky perch, and then followed.

Probably there is no more dangerous beast in the world than a wounded buffalo, but in this case it was soon over. The trail led into a donga with steep, thickly wooded sides and a sandy defile at the bottom: the bull, badly wounded, was waiting for us among the brush at the side, but luckily we saw him before we were right on him, and, though game to the last ounce of his strength, he had no chance. It was a great end to a great hunt. On examination the immense vitality of the buffalo was strikingly shown: he had been struck as he ran with two hard-nosed bullets, and these had ranged right forward from the rump and lodged one under each shoulder, yet he had

gone on with the rest, and, even when found, was standing ready to fight.

Our men were as delighted as possible at such a wind-up: the Kikuyu gave us a fine dance round our fire, and prim, little Ogunga, our best skinner, was quite in the mood of the evening by appearing before us guiltlessly drunk. He had stolen in to Embu and imbibed on sugar-spirit. He was not in the least ashamed of himself, but hastened to admit his condition with cheerful pride: his attitude, in fact, was exactly that of the man, who, when taxed with being drunk by his wife, replied, "Well, if I bain't, I've wasted saxpence." It was impossible to be angry with him for his truantry and its effectual aim, and next morning he was as dapper and prim as ever—rather more than ever, to atone for the fact that late at night the buffalo's head had been rescued from him just as he was beginning to skin it in time to a song.

The whole hunting of these days, more especially the episode of my own particular escape and Elmi's accident, brought with it a real appreciation of M'bogo, the buffalo. One felt inclined to cry "Hats off" to a beast who plays his own game so well, with so devilish a cunning and such patience and power. He is cruel and he is merciless, but there is

nothing small about him—none of the creeping stealth of the cat-tribe. He revenges himself, like a general, by a carefully planned and well-executed piece of strategy, and lies in wait for his pursuer. His point of view probably repays study better than that of any beast except the elephant, and the wisdom of the elephant is the wisdom of many generations of men, and is nearer to reason than to instinct.

THE BUFFALO SPEAKS

Oomph! Oomph! does man call me a treacherous
beast,

Mixed venom and cunning and might?
Who sneaks through the grass like a leopard, pray?
Who chooses the cowardly fight?

Why seeks he the quarrel? the swamps were mine
And the wallows I made in the reeds;
Mine were the plains and the brushwood wild:
Why come where the buffalo feeds?

No beast molests me in my power
Though if lions ask for a strife
By a spring on a weakling in the herd,
That's part of the game of life.

I dwell with the beast of the double horn,
And the wise, old giant I know;
But what of the dastardly, miserable ape,
Who fells by a distant blow?

186 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

He was more like a beast in the days gone by,
Fought bravely face to face,
Though he even then made a flashing stab
To strengthen him in the chase.

But he died too often, the puny wretch,
So he fashioned a flying sting,
And, crouching afar, he hurls it forth
To burn through everything.

Here is a story which went just wrong—
Wrong for the man, I mean ;
That mangled heap in the thorn-trees there
Will tell you what has been :—

I was grazing at peace with the herd at dawn,
Fanned by the fresh, soft breeze,
And full of the vigour and love of life—
Is it strange we have feelings like these ?—

When out of the air came a crackling tread,
And I caught the taint of man,
And straight for the shelter of the brush
With the thundering herd I ran ;

But before I reached it, " Ping " I heard,
Like a sharply snapping tree,
As the sting shot forth, and I felt the fire
Pass quivering into me.

I never turned, though I saw the ape—
I was wiser than to face
That fiery sting by charging home
Across the open space.

I crashed right into the brushwood's depths,
And not till then I turned :
Though fierce the stinging, fiercer still
Revenge and hatred burned.

I rounded back on the trail I left,
Where the thorns grew thick and low,
And I stood like a stone till that man should pass
As he tracked me, sure and slow.

Not a muscle I moved, though the hours sped,
For I knew he would follow me,
And at last through the tangle of the thorns
I saw my enemy.

I waited still, for I feared the sting,
Till the last blood mark he found
Not five yards off—then I launched myself
And dashed him to the ground !

Sweet was the food of my chosen fight,
For the black apes with him ran,
And I pounded him there, as he lay in the dust,
Till he lost the shape of man.

The flies feast now on my throbbing wound ;
I suffer, but I shall win through ;
And I gloat on the thought of those crunching bones—
Vindictive ? Well, wouldn't you ?

CHAPTER X

THE END OF THE SAFARI

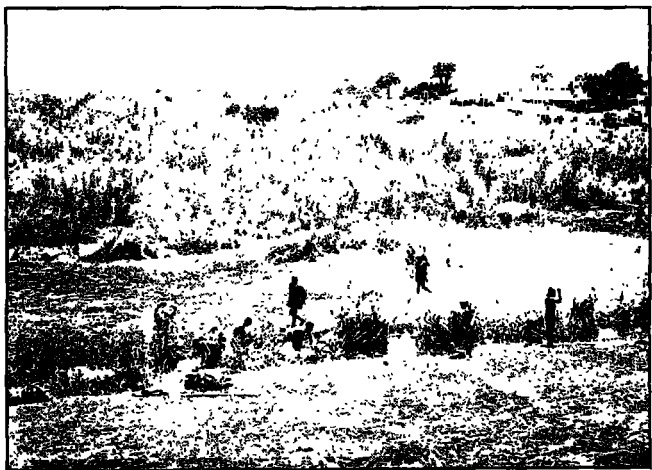
A final view of Kenia—Hippo in the Tana—"Well run, hippo"
—A tribe of children—Free food—The handling of bullion
—Camp is strangely quiet—Oweru's idea of a promise—
The rise and fall of Kiboko—The joys of motoring—
Selling off—The real end.

WE had stayed as long as we dared, if my companion was to catch his boat at Mombasa—as events proved, almost too long—so early next morning we moved camp along the Embu-Fort Hall road on the straight march back to Nairobi. We were gladdened just as we left with a last sight of Kenia, who came forth in all her beauty as if to bid us good-bye. The clouds had lain heavily on her since that morning above the Maranya, and, though we had been circling her base, she had never been visible: then we had been due north of her; now we were due south, and the view that unfolded was vastly different.

She was very beautiful, but far less rugged and grand: she seemed to rise into the sky in one great slope, instead of bursting from her



"ALONG THE EMBU-FORT HALL ROAD"



"STOPPED FOR A FEW MOMENTS TO BATHE"

forest-belt into snow, and from the snow into a final bastion of crag. We could not wonder, as she revealed herself after so many days, that she had been long passed, unnoticed and unknown ; now the dark mass hung above and not round her, and it rose and fell aside like a theatre-curtain, while the morning mists of earth floated upward in their turn. Soon she was again entirely hidden from us, and we thought was gone for the day, but half-an-hour later we saw that the wind was tearing her filmy draperies from her, and for a little while she reappeared, towering majestically into the blue, till she folded herself resolutely in the restless mantle of the clouds ; and so with a strange yearning we left her to her lonely, silent watch over her land and people.

A long march followed in heat so great that at last, on reaching one of the many little streams, the safari stopped for a few moments to bathe, a luxury in which it had not indulged since we were at the junction of the Guaso Nerok and Guaso Nyiro. We camped that night a mile or two beyond the Tana River, which is now crossed by a fine suspension bridge. Not more than a few miles above this is a pool where hippo are almost always to be found, and next morning we sent the safari direct into Fort Hall, and we ourselves struck

190 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

down to the river to investigate this pool. Sure enough, a hippo was there, but after hunting buffalo in long grass its death seemed excessively tame. After many stertorous puffs under the screen of grass by the opposite bank, like a grampus going uphill, the great beast was foolish enough to shove its nostrils up in mid-stream as we watched silently on the edge, and sank again immediately with a mighty splash and a bullet in its brain, not to float again until six or seven hours had elapsed.

One young fellow once, who was under the impression that a dead hippo floated immediately, kept on firing in a place where there were many, thinking he was missing every time, till some hours later the water was littered with the floating carcasses. The exact time they take to reappear varies with the temperature of the water. From the bank hippo-shooting does not seem to be exciting, but from a boat in one of the lakes it may be a very different story.

I cannot guarantee the veracity of the following yarn, but it was told to me by one of the engineers who built the bridge over the Tana as an account of one way in which amusement was wrung from a hippo in this very pool. The workmen used to watch it come out on to

the turf in the evening, and then one of them would get in front of it and cause himself to be chased: when the hippo had almost overtaken him, a fresh runner[†] would spring out and take his place, crossing the scent, so to speak, until the poor old beast was run to a standstill. One day the Indian foreman came to the engineer, and asked him to come down and shoot the hippo: the engineer, learning of the evening game, thought this would be a most unsportsmanlike thing to do, and refused. "Well," said the foreman, "if you won't shoot the hippo, at any rate lend me a spade to bury my son." It would appear that the hippo had at last succeeded in winning a race.

We had been relying on reaching Nairobi in a way that sounds unreal in an African hunting trip, though it is usual enough. From Fort Hall to Nairobi is a distance of some sixty miles, the last eighteen or twenty of which lie between barbed wire fencing. A lightly loaded, quick-marching safari might make this in two days; but we were now heavily loaded and the Kikuyu are not fast—fifteen miles was about one day's limit; and, though we did more at times, the number of hours increased out of all proportion to the extra distance, and the last miles were crawled. Therefore to march along this dull road was not inviting, but, as Fort

Hall lies in a rich district and the road is a good one, as East African country roads go, the necessity was avoided by an enterprising motor-service, which ran along it two or three times a week. Unfortunately both the motor-lorries employed had broken down: the only matter for comment to those who knew their manifold trials was that this had not occurred before, but it was most inconsiderate of them as far as we were concerned. We only reached Fort Hall on a Thursday afternoon, and the train for C.'s boat at Mombasa left Nairobi mid-day on Monday; moreover, our Kikuyu refused to go on.

This tribe really is composed of absolute children: they have the sunny good-nature and charm of children, and the unreasoning obstinacy of children. They were now not far from their homes, and it suddenly occurred to them that they had been away for many weeks and that they wanted to go home; so go they would, and nothing could stop them. We argued with them, and explained it would only delay them a day or two longer to take their loads into Nairobi, and then go home; no, they were going then. When they got home, there would be nothing for them to do; there was no sort of urgency—as if there ever was to an African; it wasn't that, but the idea had struck

them as just the one thing they wanted to do then and there, and so they were going to do it. We said, "Well, but suppose we refuse to pay you your wages if you desert us now?" They shrugged their shoulders, and replied in effect, "That's your affair; we are going." Rather than postpone their idea, they would have sacrificed the wages of the whole safari. There was only one thing to be done; I was staying on in the country, and my companion left me to pay them off while he pushed straight on in to Nairobi. I was to wait a day or two in the hope of the speedy repair of one of the motors, and, failing that, was to engage a fresh supply of Kikuyu, and bring the loads in in the ordinary way.

The following morning, therefore, C. left for Nairobi, taking with him the horse, mule, syces, and dogs. I went down to the Tana to superintend the work on the hippo: this was most interesting, because it had drifted down the stream and stuck on a sand-bank in the middle. The sides of the stream were too high to allow of the carcass being drawn in to the land; our boys waded in and drew it ashore, as far as it would go, and the head was then removed in the water. Except for the few days' glut on the two buffalo a week before, our boys had been out of meat, and

now they clustered thick about the carcase, and would have entirely impeded the skimmers unless they had been kept in check. The return journey up the steep hill, in such heat that even the acclimatised Abdulla streamed and said "*Moto sana*" (very hot), also held one amusing interest. I found that the report of a dead hippo had already travelled far, and that natives were steadily verging down towards the spot from many directions, whilst a number we passed, seeing our procession, made hasty inquiries of our boys and started off at once. In an hour or two little more than the skeleton would remain; evidently hippo-meat is prized, though to European ideas it looks uncommonly greasy and certainly has a rank, unenviable smell.

Except for a wildebeeste which C. shot on his way in, sport was now ended and the solid drudgery of winding up a safari began. All my belongings and trophies had to be separated from my companion's as a start: we had docketed our trophies with regularity, but even so to divide is not easy; labels get torn off and some guess-work is inevitable. Then sharing a tent, as we had done, is a glorious opportunity for untidiness, which no conscientiously unmethodical tent-boy would dream of neglecting. The mixture of Amisi, Asmanie,



AN IRIIT AND CAMI A STUDY IN PROPORTIONS



"A WILDEBEESTIE"

and our own untidiness had produced an incomparable jumble in our boxes, in spite of our attempt to see that the same things were packed as a matter of course in the same boxes. Asmanie was better than Amisi, who could never find us anything except at the very bottom of the very last box in the place, but even Asmanie had an unconquerable aversion to conservatism, and was never so happy as when he could hide something in a box in which it had never been before.

The next thing to do was to pay off the recalcitrant Kikuyu, a task from which only one form of pleasure could be extracted: the sense of unlimited wealth is not easily banished from the mind. I walked back from the government office with a boy staggering along behind me with two sacks of bullion; one contained rupees, the other cents. The man who tipped waiters with a gilded farthing that he might say graciously, "I never give less," would have revelled legitimately in the Indian currency, which has, strangely enough, been adopted in British East Africa: for a small sum one can taste all the feelings of a millionaire by a generous spread of cents. The rupee is worth one shilling and fourpence, and the cent is its hundredth part: it, as well as the ten-cent piece, has a hole bored through the middle

of it, and is carried by the natives on a string round their necks.

Now for an hour or more I sat at the door of our tent, the sacks behind me and the Kikuyu and those few other porters who desired to be paid off ranged in a circle in front of the table, and handled bullion like sand. It needed doing carefully, for all had taken advances during the safari, and some had been with us longer than others; also it would not have been difficult for a few of the Kikuyu, all of whom we never got to know individually, to impersonate a stupid companion. I knew, of course, the correct numbers, but to identify each individual was more difficult, though Oweru stood by to watch over the interests both of his Bwana and his men. At last it was done: the *sufurias* (cooking-pots) and little tents, which belong to the safari, not the men, were surrendered, and in a very short time camp had shrunk to about eighteen men—just our personal boys and the *pukka* porters, who were stolidly indifferent to the departure of the Kikuyu. It is a question, though, whether for the sake of this reliability they were worth just double the wages.

That evening the tents seemed strangely few, the camp unnaturally quiet, and I felt suddenly very much alone, for they were all

friends, and had been our companions for what, looking back, seemed a lifetime. Even little Oweru, whom I wished to keep on as my personal servant, had gone; he said he must go home to pay his hut-tax or else his hut would be burnt down, but promised faithfully to return to me in Nairobi in eight days. Perhaps it would have been wiser to have kept back his well-earned "backsheesh" till he had rejoined me, but I believed in his sincerity. He did not come in eight days, nor yet in a month, and I never saw him again, and I thought "he has forgotten, or else he is not willing to keep his promise"; but those who know the native's mind by long experience told me I was wronging him. What was time to a Kikuyu? To him his promise would be effectually fulfilled when, his money spent, he made his way in to Nairobi to find his Bwana six months or a year hence; but by then to that Bwana the land of the Kikuyu would have become a summer's dream, the home of imperishable memories, and no more.

Kiboko had been the special protégé and delight of my companion, and, indeed, his connection with us had an interest all its own; he had drifted into our camp a few days after our start, and asked to be signed on as a porter. He was only eighteen or thereabouts, but very

strong even for a Kavirondo, and he smiled so cheerfully over the heaviest loads that he was promoted to be the carrier of a camera and used for all sorts of odd jobs, till he became indispensable as assistant tent-boy and second gunboy. He would get our breakfast, be out with C. the whole day, and then get our dinner and see to the tent with amazing energy; he was never known to be tired, and when he ate was wrapped in mystery. He was a mission boy, one of the few, by all accounts, who had profited by that education, and unusually intelligent. When our time drew to an end my companion asked him, more to test him than with any fixed idea of taking him to a land so foreign and so distant, whether he would like to go to America with his Bwana. No answer could be framed, which is more perfectly reasoned and full of more pregnant brevity than the nine words of Kiboko's reply:—" *Americani mbali sana*," he said, " *Hapana Kikuyu, hapana Wakamba, hapana Kavirondo, Wasangu iote*" (America very long way off; no Kikuyu, no Wakamba, no Kavirondo, only white men).

He stayed on in Africa as my servant, and changed completely with his elevation in the social scale; like many a lesser man, he could not rise above sudden prosperity. To atone

for the years in which he had run about as a naked savage on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza, he overdid the airs and graces of a dandy, swaggered about in the costume popularly attributed to the Englishman on the continent—that is, knickerbockers and fancy stockings—and fell off proportionately both in utility and cheerfulness.

Just when all that could be done at Fort Hall had been done, and I was thinking of recruiting fresh porters, one of the repaired motor-lorries lumbered in, and at daybreak next day we filled it to overflowing with all our loads. We were not a very large safari; the lorry could have taken double the actual weight, but such things as an elephant-scalp or a zebra-skin, for instance, are wonderfully cumbrous, and we filled the entire space. Then I paid off the remaining porters, gave them food to take them to Nairobi, and with a couple of boys entered upon the last stage of the journey. I have no wish to malign that motor-lorry; it is admirably adapted to the work and its work is very useful; it does in a day what would ordinarily take several, and speeds the traveller through miles of settlers' farms, as dull a march as could be found. A light railway is being made; but at present the motor-service alone saves that dreariness, and yet the day it sub-

stitutes is a terrible affair. Perhaps the bare idea of a motor-car on an East African country lane is suggestive enough in itself: for eight and a half hours, including an hour's break for lunch at the Blue Post Hotel, at the Thika River, I sat in the most awful machine devised by man.

It was built to carry three tons, and looked it, a vast structure of weight, noise and jar: the rattle of all the motor-buses of Piccadilly would not have been heard beside it. The road was in no place very good, and in most places very bad: once we broke down the planking at the beginning of a little bridge; our front wheels jumped the gap, but our back wheels stuck, and a pause ensued while the chauffeur pounded a stone till its fragments levelled the path. Here and there we took on a settler, which meant shifting and piling still more confusedly the loads of our safari; and the jolting was at times so bad that I sat in a fever of anxiety lest some precious load, carefully carried for weeks, should be ruined now. Once a table and once a buffalo-head fell off with a bump on the road; but neither suffered injury, and the boys, who reposed as best they could on the top of the heap, were ordered to keep a strict watch, and yell if there was loss. This watch was by no means easy, for we



KHICI MIFUFA ANI OWIFU MIF FALING I DI ONCI



"ONCI WL BROKL DOWN"

travelled in a great whirl of red dust, which blew along in front of us like the pillar of the Israelites, and made the heat still more unendurable. I was told it was far worse in the rains, as then the journey was apt to remain unfinished; but my informants need not have been so eager for the honour of their road—it proved itself quite sufficiently tiring and begriming to satisfy any one, especially on a Sunday too; and the contrast between myself alighting at the Norfolk Hotel, and C., who had had a day in which to arrange affairs in Nairobi and had become a spruce townsman, was almost ludicrous. At mid-day on the following morning he caught the train for Mombasa, and the safari was over.

That is true enough in its plain, literal sense, but in reality the most arduous part of it remained. The freedom, openness, and hunting were ended; the disposal of the outfit was still to do. C. had found that to buy satisfactorily was difficult; I had now to find that to sell satisfactorily was impossible. In this let me not be misunderstood; there is no suggestion of unfairness; it is the result of the circumstances in which a European is placed. He has gathered together a number of articles for which he can have no possible further use; he must sell before he leaves the country, and

202 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

the inadequate result of a forced sale is well known. Those sportsmen who are fitted out by an agent do not buy—they merely hire everything they need for their trip: the rate charged is not low, but for any one who is only shooting for a few months and then going straight home, this is probably the cheapest, as it is certainly the easiest, way of doing things. On returning to Nairobi every article is taken over by the agents again, and the sportsman is free to depart.

Many men go further than this, and have their boys paid off by the agents, for which, of course, they are charged a regular commission. This plan is a simple proof of the entire lack of sympathy between the sportsman who adopts it and his boys. It is perfectly easy to treat the porters as if they were machines; if there is a managing white hunter, or even if only a really capable headman, the sportsman may see in them nothing more than he would in a van which carries his loads. But they are not machines, and there can be a strong personal feeling between them and their Bwana, when they have camped together as a unit for miles and months. They are the most interesting part of safari-life, if the Bwana cares to make them so; and personally it gave me a real feeling of pleasure to be

accosted, as I was again and again in Nairobi, weeks after our safari had ended, with a hearty "*Jambo, Bwana,*" and to recognise, often with difficulty, in the gaily dressed, greatly changed speaker, one of our former porters, who had not forgotten me. It is not a lasting tie at all—a little later, his earnings dissipated, he would be off on another safari; but it is reasonable to hope that he and his fellows occasionally think of the safaris that are past and the Bwanas they have served, even as some Bwanas assuredly think of them.

We had made an arrangement for the entire disposal of our outfit which fell through, but was nevertheless one which might be imitated in a number of cases. A friend was hoping to come out to shoot a few weeks after our time was planned to end: he agreed to take the outfit we had collected as necessary for a safari off our hands at a reasonable valuation: unfortunately he was prevented from coming, and so it had still to be disposed of. There is always a sale for tents and camp-articles, and one of the many outfitters will certainly buy them; but for the reasons pointed out one sells at their figure. A horse and mule can be sold very fairly: the price of mules is jumpy owing to fresh arrivals for sale at intervals, that of horses much steadier; for instance, I

204 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

sold my companion's horse after four months of hard work for the same sum as he had originally given for it. Dogs no one wants, and cartridges are a drug on the market; they are not worth taking home, but, if one gets rid of them for their bare cost at home and loses only the cost of transport and the customs, one has done well. Not only do cartridges deteriorate rapidly in Africa, but the outfitters have hundreds of rounds and private individuals offer next to nothing as soon as they learn of one's desire to sell. It is splendid business training remaining on and selling off one's outfit bit by bit, but it does not increase one's love for one's fellow-men.

Then all one's trophies have to be packed, passed, and shipped, and for this it is almost essential to place oneself in the hands of such agents as Messrs. Newland, Tarlton & Co. : they have all the facilities, and have done it for hundreds before, and are doing it for others every day. No one will be pleased at the cost of the necessary tin-lined cases for shipping the trophies, or at the exceedingly heavy freightage levied by the authorities of the Uganda Railway on them, and even more on ivory, but big-game shooting in Africa can under no circumstances be a cheap amusement, though the extent of the outlay can vary prodigiously,

and neither of these two items can be avoided.¹ The first seems to spring from a monopoly of manufacture, which no one has really tried to combat, and the second is perhaps not altogether unreasonable.

A vast number of miscellaneous *shauris* of every conceivable kind, much tedious business-bargaining, this was the real end of our safari, sometimes amusing, usually unprofitable, and always instructive.

¹ It may, perhaps, be as well to add, as a guide to others, that, exclusive of the journey from London to Nairobi and back, and the £50 for a sportsman's licence, the whole safari—that is, two and a half months of actual camping, and all expenses connected with it in the shape of porters' wages, food, clothes, outfit, ammunition, shipment of trophies, &c., cost me rather more than £250. A resident would spend far less, whilst there is practically no limit in the other direction; a white hunter alone, for example, requires two to three guineas a day.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER-DAYS

A wonderful country—The recession of game—Pax Britannica
—The Hindi-man—The point-of-view—An uncomfortable
stage—The little unknown and his chickens—A typewriter
—The working of the charm—Morals v. clothes—Entebbe
—Kampala—Jinja and the Ripon Falls—"Gangways up."

THE vast majority of sportsmen who visit British East Africa return to Europe as soon as they are free of their safari : some have only a limited time at their disposal, and prefer to spend the whole of that shooting ; others with leisure before them are still not interested in anything else. Yet it is a country that has an overwhelming interest ; more than any in the world, it is a new country.

Twelve years ago the railway was only just being pushed up from Mombasa : not a single hut marked the prosperous town of Nairobi, which to-day consists of nearly 1,400 white residents, several thousand Indians, and an uncounted number of natives, and has electric light, a race course, polo ground, and golf course, in fact, everything except a regular

theatre. In maps of twenty years ago Kilima 'Njaro, Lake Naivasha, Kenia, and a few of the rivers are shown; the rest is a great blank. Now, to give one concrete example of the progress that has been made, at Naivasha the great agricultural sales are held, and settlers attend from all parts of the Highlands. The advance has been of absolutely phenomenal rapidity: a book written three or four years ago tells of natives fleeing at the approach of white men from Donyo Sabuk, a hill quite close to Nairobi.

The peculiarity of the country is that it contains within it almost every climate: the railway, which runs from Mombasa on the coast to Kisumu on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza, ascends at one stage to over 8,000 feet, and passes through rubber, sisal-fibre, and cocoa plantations on its way to black wattle, sheep farms, and wheat cultivation. The importance of this ascent is now too well recognised for elaboration. Nairobi, which is itself about 5,500 feet up, stands at the end of the great Athi plains and the beginning of the Highlands proper: from there starts the plateau of white settlement as opposed to planters' country. There, though it is still doubted by some high medical authorities whether the conditions are favourable to the permanent

residence of Europeans, and whether there may not be a slow deterioration in the future generations—there, right on the equator, is slowly forming a compact British colony, the last that can be formed in the world.

At the time of my stay a more settled political peace reigned than had been known for several years, and in the words of the present governor, Sir Percy Girouard, words cordially endorsed by the popular voice, the Protectorate had turned the corner. Like all young colonies, it had had its difficulties and heart-burnings; at one period of its history relations between official and settler were strained almost to breaking point, and all were then hailing the new régime with sincere joy. Unfortunately the last few months of this year (1911) have seen a fresh and bitter outbreak of dissension, brought about by interference from home: it is to be hoped, however, that a governor possessed of such personal influence and tact as Sir Percy Girouard will be able to go over his work again, and end by renewing the promise of an unchequered future for the Protectorate.

No one who has not traced its progress from its earliest years—or at least the years immediately following those in which a handful of the East African Company's servants, a few

devoted missionaries, and several adventurous hunters, such as Neumann, were its only white inhabitants—is really qualified to write of the country as a whole; but it is impossible to be engaged in work in Nairobi, even a very short time, and especially in work of a legal character, without being deeply impressed with its potentialities. After seeing only the sporting and the vagrant side, to take on such work and obtain just a glimpse of the sides which must before so very long drive the game to the furthest limits where habitation will not come, was of the deepest interest. To many, British East Africa is known solely for its wealth of game: there is surer knowledge in it as a colony. The game will survive in its abundance for years yet, but that eventually colonists will roll it back leaves no room for doubt. It has happened in South Africa; it must also in East Africa. Already the great game reserves are causing some discontent, enough to be an indication of the inevitable, among those whose farms are near; no shot may be fired in these reserves, and as a consequence lions have never been so numerous as now on the outskirts of Nairobi, which lies just by the Southern Game Reserve. The regulations of the game warden are strict; it will hardly be the sportsman who seriously diminishes the

210 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

game, but the irresistible pressure of the spreading farms. The trend of things is shown in a legal office; there is some litigation, but most of the work is in connection with land: all along the railway, as soon as the Taru Desert and the Plains are passed and the Highlands reached, land is already taken up. Behind that, settlement goes hand in hand with increased communication; a light railway is, as mentioned before, in course of construction to displace the motor-service from Fort Hall, and this is but the beginning of things.

Even on safari no one can mistake the strides that have been made in the last few years in every direction: it is not so long ago since the Masai were a terror in the land, raiding even as far as three hundred miles from their own territory: if a wanderer meets one now, he is sure of the handshake of peace. The Masai are an intelligent race and the owners of thousands of head of cattle; warriors though they are, they will never risk the loss of these, and war is a memory alone. Three years ago the Meru were a little known tribe, cutting up white men's safaris; we passed through their country in absolute security. The natives pay for the Pax Britannica, but the price they paid for their nominal liberty before its advent was unending raids and bloodshed.

Up to now a tax of three rupees has been levied on every hut, but this is easy to evade ; a hut is but a temporary lodgment at best, and at the tax-gathering season many would burn their huts and crowd together in one, so a poll-tax is being substituted.

Under British rule the *shambas* flourish ; there is every inducement to cultivate if some money must be raised for a tax, and the rest may be secured to its owner. These *shambas* will make no small addition to the country's wealth as soon as the natives realise that there is a market for their produce. Just at present the very fertility of the soil is a drawback, enough for maintenance is so easily obtained ; and the native, like many others, is no fonder of work than necessity compels him to be, and has not the spur of ambition, so that the supply of native labour often falls short of the demand, and the question as to the best means of remedying this is not free from complications.

Another difficult question is that of the position of the Hindi-man. He came with the coolies who made the railway, and has stayed on and prospered. In every post is his store : his mode of living enables him to defy European competition : he is a bad type of Indian, is far more shrewd than the native, and an evil

influence and tyrant among them. He cannot obtain a grant of land in the Highlands, but some are exceedingly wealthy merchants and are beginning to resent the 'prohibition. The statements of one of the most prosperous, who visited England a while ago, have been shown to be wholly without accuracy; but the question is undoubtedly a vexed one, and the dogmatic pronouncements of Mr. Winston Churchill, who was just six weeks in the country, have not helped to make the solution easier. He considered the Protectorate a country made for the special purpose of relieving India of her surplus population; the settlers have an idea that it is destined for a higher rôle, and many urge that the only logical course is to remove the Hindi-man entirely.

Some little part of all these sides it is possible to see by remaining on when the safari is a thing of the past: the chief value is the point-of-view. A traveller, whatever his qualifications, can only be a visitor; the shortest residence makes one for the time being a colonial. There is so much in being in daily contact with people who have no definite intention of returning home. Probably many, possibly all, have it in the back of their minds; but meanwhile this is their home, and the ties

that bind them to it become more knotted every year. Their whole outlook is different; it is more free and less trammelled by the ordinary conventions, though no doubt it is chained as firmly to their own. Books play an insignificant part in the lives of most, for their reading is in the broad expanse of open country. They give to the stranger unstinted kindness and a hospitality which almost startles.

One Sunday, for instance, I rode out some miles with friends to visit a settler on his farm, and was made welcome, not as I might have been in England just for my friends' sakes, but with a genuine warmth as if I had been one of themselves. It arises, of course, in outlying farms from the rarity of visitors, but it is not left at that, and can be found in Nairobi too. As a whole, however, society is uncomfortable: the town is either too large or too small—too large to be just one pleasant community of whites, too small for the division into cliques, into which it has in fact fallen. The great preponderance of the official element perhaps makes this inevitable; at any rate there is more than a tendency for the subordinate to try and live up to his chief's expenditure and for no one to recognise his inferior.

The way in which residents speak with almost bated breath of "the Hill"—that is,

Nairobi Hill, the Mayfair of the town—and of “the Club” strikes the stranger with a sense of the ridiculous until he realises that it springs from this stage of social division and has an undercurrent of tragedy. As the town grows, however, each clique will develop into a society of its own, and all will be comfortable again.

Besides the interest which it gives to the work and the society, a stranger's point-of-view brings not a little fun. To the High Court Pleader's office, in which I worked, came many types of people with grievances, adjustments, and business of great variety. Now it would be a man proposing to settle and inquiring about land, now an excited Indian with a complaint against the post-office or a neighbour, now a Somali desirous of removing quarantined cattle. Often I had neither seen nor heard of a particular visitor before; but, if my superior happened to be out, he would address me as if I were fully cognisant of his name and previous history: one instance will show how golden is silence and an interested demeanour.

A little unknown, finding me by myself one day, plunged straight into the middle of a complicated story. Soon I grasped the fact that he had dissolved partnership, and was saying that seven chickens had died between

the dates of the dissolution and the final award of the arbitrator : he was content to bear the loss of three, thought his late partner would see the justice of bearing an equal loss, but felt sure there would be trouble about the seventh. I was silently marvelling at the extraordinary love of litigation evidenced by this disagreement over a single chicken deceased, and was puzzling out some tactful words of advice, though at the same time realising that he was the very jewel of a client, when the little unknown chanced to mention the word "ostriches." The seventh chicken, it transpired, was a cock-ostrich worth about £30 ! Undoubtedly all lies in the point-of-view ; it was accident alone which caused him to give me the clue, for they were all chickens to him.

Then it was not easy to get accustomed to our clerks, who were both Indians. The Germans have done some very good work in German East Africa by way of training the native industrially, so that he takes a far larger share in office work ; on the British side the whole of the small clerical work is done by Indians, who are excellent at routine work, but completely baffled if asked to think for themselves. Our two clerks were very different from one another : the first was a most intelligent and honest man, quite capable of running

the office by himself; the second was merely a copier and typewriter, and often beyond the pale of reason. Without doubt he was the worst typewriter in the world. His room was divided from the office by a wooden partition. Through this would come a "click"; then would follow a long pause, and at first I was misguided enough to believe that he had gone out or fallen asleep; but no, he was only wrapped in anxious thought, and finally, breaking through this into a solution usually futile, he would give another "click" and have another headache. Every half-hour he would come in and ask, with a worried, painstaking look on his sallow face, if he had read the next sentence right. He never had, and I would read it to him patiently—it was hopeless policy to be angry—and before long, in he would come again, stuck at another fence. But really, when a man can spell bankruptcy "bankerpotcy," and let it go with uncorrected pride, he is a fatalist, and past praying for—not unlike the men of the King's African Rifles, who, if they start by aiming badly at the target, become discouraged and will receive no instruction, but shrug their shoulders and say, "What use is it for you to teach me, or for me to try? Allah willed that I should miss a thousand years ago."

Work in Nairobi has many pleasant alleviations ; the residential houses are spread over a wide area, and it is possible to dwell contentedly in less distinguished quarters than on "the Hill." Most people use bicycles, for the roads in and around Nairobi are excellent, but he who comes off safari is already equipped : I retained, and used diligently, both my mule and my companion's horse. The horse had only just come down from Abyssinia when we took him out and found the clustering people and shops both interesting and frightening ; the mule was a perfect terror in town. It is beyond human ability to persuade a mule that one does not always want to go where one usually goes ; in a very few days, to pass the office without a sudden sideways dive at its doorway, often with exciting results to bicyclists and passers-by, was a sheer impossibility. Indeed, though much of the work is very similar to that of a solicitor's office at home, the difference of the setting is positively amazing. Instead of arriving by a stuffy underground, or groping his way through a fog, the legal East African can come cantering along a pretty road or through the Somali village, where white-robed, graceful figures will regard him with indolent superiority or will slumber undisturbed on couches under poky verandahs.

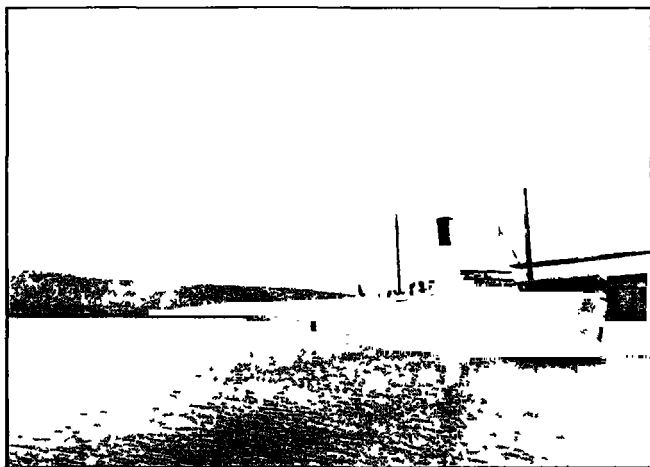
218 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

If the spirit moves him, he can sing without scandalising the native passers-by; they will stare anyway, so even a bad song matters little: he is sure of the sun, except in certain months, and it is only too warm for pleasant riding at mid-day. Most noticeable of all, his road is clear, for the natives have an unreasoning terror of a horse, and are in some reasonable fear of a mule, and they will scatter frantically at the very sound of hoofs. If the stranger does not intend staying in the country for the rest of his life, he had better pack speedily and depart, for it is incredible how soon what starts as a mere experience becomes a life: the fetters begin to rivet themselves, the charm to work, and if he tarries he will end by settling.

But before he goes, he ought most certainly to pay a visit, if only a flying one, to the neighbouring territory of Uganda. It is so easy to do; railroad and steamer have made the reading of the struggling journeys of such men as Stanley, Burton and Speke a great backward cast of the imagination. On the Victoria Nyanza are several very comfortable steamers, of which the *Clement Hill*, of about 600 tons, is the largest; and there are two possible trips, either round the lake, which takes ten days or more, or across the northern end. This latter will take the sightseer from Kisumu



' ON THE VICTORIA NIANZA



"THE *Clement Hill* . . . IS THE LARGEST"

to Entebbe, the official capital of Uganda ; from Entebbe to Lusiro, the port for Kampala and Mengo ; from Lusiro to Jinja, the port for the Ripon Falls ; and from Jinja back again to Kisumu : the whole trip from Nairobi takes exactly a week.

Kisumu alone is well worth the visit : it is in the land of the Kavirondo, and they deserve some attention. Our Kavirondo porters had lost some of their most salient tribal characteristics, and on the quays and among those resident in Kisumu clothes of a sort are worn ; but in the surrounding districts or by the market-place, to which the villagers bring their produce, the real Kavirondo, untouched by white men's usage, can still be studied. Most of the married women wear a little fringed belt in front, and a tail behind ; tradition says this owes its origin to their belief that they are animals, and must therefore supply the deficiencies of nature : the men and the girls wear absolutely nothing. It is a most astonishing sight to see them crowding to such a station as Kibigori, near Kisumu, to watch the arrival of the train : many of the other tribes may be scantily attired, may carry a blanket or a wrap for warmth at night, and be splendidly indifferent as to the manner of their carrying it, but at least they do carry it. Yet it is a commonplace that the Kavirondo

are the most moral of the East^uAfrican tribes, and they work with prodigious and untiring energy. Those who live among the Baganda, or people of Uganda, are fond of emphasising the contrast between the apparent savagery which the traveller leaves on the one side of the lake and the apparent civilisation he finds on the other, but the word "apparent" is a necessary addition. The Baganda are a courteous, clever race, and are dressed in flowing robes, but all the impartial people who have means of knowing—the officers of the steamers, for example—say unhesitatingly that they have not the sturdy virtues of the naked Kavirondo.

In Uganda, in spite of the divisions between the Roman Catholic fathers and the Protestant missionaries, more has been accomplished in the way of proselytising than in any other country of like character. There were two of the White Fathers of Algiers on the *Clement Hill*; they read their breviaries with unflagging diligence, yet it seemed to a layman's mind that that act of devotion was not a complete preparation for the work in store for them, but the objection points straight to a controversy. Some of the missionaries have undoubtedly done good work, though as a whole they seem too often to ignore the physical conditions and



"BY THE MARKET-PLACE"



"IT STOOD . . . A ROOFLESS PICTURE OF DESOLATION"

moral standpoint of the people they are seeking to raise. Of the work of one class, no one can speak except in terms of the highest praise, and that is the work of the medical missionaries.

Entebbe is noted for its beauty, though this has now been impaired, since trees and foliage have been *unstintingly* cleared from the lake's edge to try and cope with the ravages of the sleeping-sickness. It lies on a point, and was originally chosen as an easy place to defend: now that need has passed, and it is so far from the up-country stations, to which officials have to make their way, that there is talk of removing the government offices to a higher, more healthy and more central spot.

Kampala is better off: it is seven miles inland, and is made up of hills. Kampala is the name of only one; Mengo, where the king lives, is another; the cathedral hill is Nambirembe, and this has a tale of disaster. Only a few weeks before my visit, lightning struck the cathedral, which is perched on the very top of the hill: it burst into flames, and, though every effort was made to check them, it stood then a *roofless* picture of desolation. The loss is irremediable, for the roof was made of elephant-grass, beautifully plaited with bark, the work of natives, and is never likely to be done again.

222 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

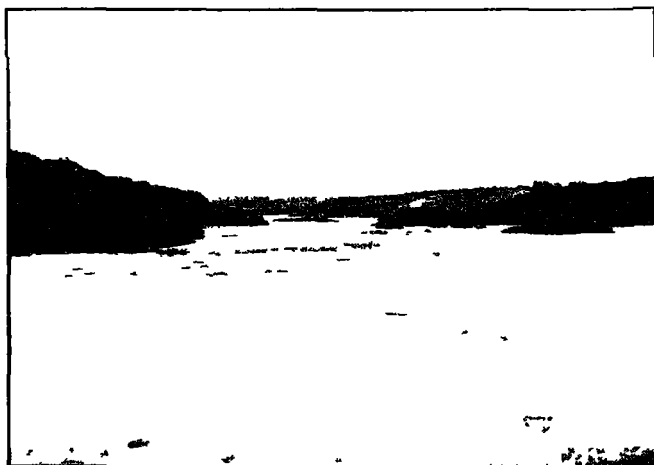
The building, which held about 4,000 people, was the glory of Christian Uganda.

The rickshaw journey to Kampala from Lusiro has a fascination. The depth of the green all round is so unlike that of East Africa; this is tropical, which the Highlands are not, and the whole scenery strikes one with a sense of novelty. Then the eternal chant of the runners is a thing to be remembered, blending with the memory of the day. Seven miles up and seven miles down they sang, nor did they ever once vary the tune, nor, as far as I could detect, the words of their song. Jinja is the next of the stopping-places on this north-end trip; these are fixed, and a fine of 2,000 rupees is exacted if the steamer lands at an unauthorised place; for, though it is hard to realise, the peaceful shores and islands by which one passes are in very truth the home of death. The Bavuma were once a great people, feared even by the Baganda; the sleeping-sickness has entirely destroyed them. The islands have been depopulated by order, and are left to a few unlucky askaris, whose duty it is to prevent the return of the miserable, uncomprehending exiles, and to the *glossina palpalis*, the death-carrying variety of the tsetse fly.

Jinja^{am} itself is the port that does most of



' THE KIPON FATS . ARE OF NO GRANDEUR



" THE FIRST DDDYING REACH "

the export trade of Uganda: it lies not ten minutes walk from the Ripon Falls, the long-sought source of the Nile. These are of no grandeur; the scene bears a close resemblance to the outflow of a large burn from a Scotch loch, a resemblance heightened by the frequent presence of angling residents, and the interest is almost wholly of the imagination. It stands for the secret centuries have sought to discover, and it is not possible to look down the first eddying reach of that mighty river without thinking of its long journey, and, more, of all that it has meant and still means to Egypt. In the neighbourhood of the Falls, I chanced upon an acquaintance, who bears a name that will not easily die in Uganda: it was the son of Bishop Hannington, and the son, under the conditions of settled order and peace, is working as a missionary not far from the spot where his father was murdered by the Basoga in 1885.

On the *Clement Hill* was a most fitting little library; unlike those on so many steamers, it was made up, not of indifferent novels, but of the books of the great African explorers, and also of recent travellers, missionaries, and residents. It is easy to read such when crossing the Victoria Nyanza, and even a flying visit may leave impressions of

lasting interest. And yet, when all is done, when Uganda and Nairobi lie back along the railway and across the lake, when the order "Gangways up" has been given and the tin roofs of the Kilindini customs are fading back into a blur of green, or later still, when the days are drawing steadily towards the grey, damp sky of England, it will not be these the traveller will remember. Even the wild life will fade in the memory, like a game that is played and over; but before him, then and always, will float a vision of camp—again he will look into the glowing caves of the great log-fires, again he will hear the murmurs and chants of his men. In these lie the true spirit of Africa, the land of the indefinable charm—the land which, as the old, old saying has it, no one who has once known her, is ever able to forget.

APPENDIX

PRACTICAL OUTFITTING

The *personnel* of a safari—Personal camp equipment—Camp equipment for the men—General camp equipment—Field-kit—Rifles—Medical and surgical.

So much has been already said of the *personnel* of our safari that little need be added here; if we were to go again, we would have it much the same. No doubt the Wanyamwazi, who come from German East Africa, are the best porters obtainable; we had three or four who carried our tent and heaviest loads, were always the first in at the end of the day's march and gave no trouble whatsoever; but the Wanyamwazi are only porters, and useless for anything except the carrying of loads and such ordinary duties of camp as the pitching of tents and the getting of fire-wood. A safari mainly composed of men of this tribe would be very little trouble and be very uninteresting. We had a great jumble of tribes—at one time thirteen, including English and American, were represented—and this diversity had a fascinating side. The peculiarities of the Kikuyu have been already described; it is for a man's individual choice whether their interest and their low scale of pay outweigh their child-like obstinacy, small frames, and propensity to desert in a body. Our gluttonous Kavirondo were men of very

unequable temperament: they were inclined to grumble and fond of bullying, and on the other hand they were the life and soul of the camp; moreover, the two best were absolutely indefatigable workers. Some Wakamba are essential, for every member of this tribe is a born hunter; they can be sent out to locate game and are admirable skimmers. Many sportsmen engage special skimmers at a high rate of pay, but this seems quite unnecessary, provided that one of the Bwanas or a good headman knows enough to supervise the work. The net conclusion is that for the easiest and most uneventful safari a man will be well advised to take mainly Wanyamwazi and a few Wakamba.

There remain four special classes:—gunboy, headman, cook, and tent-boy: the agents have all the best on their books, and an independent deal will probably result in the engagement of an unsatisfactory man. To judge by the supply, Somalis are in greatest demand as gunboys, and the reason is not hard to find. Somalis, whose bravery is beyond dispute, are only too ready to run the hunt, and the majority of sportsmen seem willing that they should; but a Somali is one of the most excitable of men; he demands an exorbitant salary, and he cannot really compare with a Wakamba. A Wakamba will not take the initiative, but he will follow unflinchingly into the most dangerous places. Also, he has acquired the whole art of hunting from his infancy, and remains absolutely cool; a still more important recommendation is that he is under little or no temptation to fire the rifle he carries; it is not his natural weapon, and he is simply there to hand it when required.

A good headman is a treasure, for he needs to be a man of authority and possessed of a power for

organisation. We had three, first a Swahili, who had every qualification, and rendered all void by incurable laziness and bad temper; secondly, a Somali, who quivered with impotent rage and could control no one and enforce no discipline; and thirdly, a Kavirondo, whom we had already promoted once, from porter to askari; he was far the most satisfactory, for he not only worked very hard himself, but made his fellows work. By all accounts, however, an efficient and willing Swahili is the best headman. Our failures gave us most of the work to do ourselves, and, though we learnt a great deal and came to know our men much better, it brought too much detailed trouble to be recommended.

A swift and competent cook we also lacked, as well as a reliable and methodical tent-boy; and so much of one's comfort depends on these two that it is worth taking any amount of trouble at the start to engage satisfactory men. Any intelligent porter can be converted into a syce; but a Wakamba is the best. A Somali gunboy will demand anything up to seventy-five or eighty rupees a month and special food; a Wakamba will be better at thirty rupees a month; headman, cook, and tent-boy will also vary round that figure. The luxurious sometimes take a Goanese cook; but he is nearly as expensive as a Somali and a very poor walker—not an unimportant point, as the cook should be among the first to reach the camping-ground. Askaris cost twelve rupees a month, professional porters ten, and Kikuyu five; the pay of the Kikuyu and Meru we engaged as we went along varied from four to six.

The question of a white hunter is purely personal; most of these are very experienced hunters and very

228 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

interesting companions, but to our way of thinking the inclusion of one would have ruined the trip. We should probably have brought home better collections of heads; but they would of necessity have had far less value in our eyes, and of all that we did ourselves among the men and after the game we should have learnt only an outward and superficial fraction.

The *personnel* of a safari can vary greatly according to the idiosyncrasies of the Bwana; the details of outfitting are necessarily more uniform, and yet to tell another man how he should outfit himself is not entirely unlike telling him how to furnish his house. The following details, therefore, are in no sense definite; at most they can only help other travellers to form an idea of what they will require and the general cost, and perhaps they may so serve as a useful basis for disagreement. They are, at any rate, the result of first-hand investigation and experience. It will be convenient to divide them under six sub-headings:—

- I. Personal Camp Equipment.
- II. Camp Equipment for the Men.
- III. General Camp Equipment.
- IV. Field-kit.
- V. Rifles.
- VI. Medical and Surgical.

I.—PERSONAL CAMP EQUIPMENT

THE TENT.—In the tropics a heavy tent is essential to keep out the sun; any of the lighter kinds are most unsatisfactory, for in them a man dare not take off his hat when the sun is up. Size is not particularly important, but in addition to the tent proper it is as

well to have a "bath attachment," a small extension in the rear buttoning on to the main tent. No one takes cold baths in East Africa, and in this attachment a man can have his hot bath without fear of catching a chill; luggage can also be stored in it. The ground cloth of the tent should hook up to the walls so that all bugs walk under instead of across it. The tent-fly should be very large and come nearly to the ground at the sides, and should be fitted with a verandah in front from five to eight feet long, under which you can eat and sit. The tent is your home, and it is money well spent to buy or hire the best you possibly can.

Some of the very best are made by Edgington, London; second-hand tents by this maker can usually be got in Nairobi, but the Indians will make one of the same material and considerably cheaper, and it is probably the best plan to pick your own material. There are many kinds, but the most satisfactory is the heaviest green canvas, containing no waterproof compound. Meghi Amad & Co., Shop 28, Nairobi, will make a good tent very cheaply—that is, if you stop to bargain with them. The best tent without a thin coloured lining should cost about 190 rupees; lined, 250 rupees. See that the stitching is double, that the ropes are of cotton, which will not shrink and need adjustment whenever it gets wet or suddenly dry, that the inside is fitted with convenient pockets, rifle-slings, &c., and that the poles are of good, straight-grained wood.

BED.—Practically every one has the ordinary compactum X folding camp-bed; it can be bought anywhere in Nairobi for 25–30 rupees, and there is no need to bring one out from home. A folding cork mattress is a useless encumbrance, since a heavy blanket doubled

220 BABLE IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

under you is as good, and serves other purposes as well. I had in addition a Wolsey *balie* which I laid on my camp-bed; this could have been used for sleeping out, and it made an invaluable hold-all. Mosquito-net. should of course be taken; it may be seldom necessary to put them up, but when it is, neglect is likely to have disastrous consequences.

BATH-TUB, &c.—Get a large galvanised iron tub, and avoid all folding nuisances. In such a one a decent bath can be enjoyed; it will also be useful to boil out the skulls of your trophies, and when on the march it will hold all the cook's outfit. Wash-basins, if made of enamel-ware, are less trouble than a folding wash-stand and cost much less. We had also for the two of us a folding table, two folding chairs, and a deck chair—this last a pure luxury; our table outfit consisted of six enamel-ware soup-plates, three enamel-ware dishes, three enamel-ware cups, four enamel-ware glasses, six knives, forks and spoons, a salt and pepper shaker, a tin with a cover for sugar, and, most important of all, a sparklet bottle with several extra parts. The sparklets can be bought even at distant stations like Meru. Spring candlesticks with glass globes are in common use, but they are always getting broken. We mainly used a candlestick in an old bottle, and had storm lanterns for carrying: a little folding candle-lantern, such as is issued to the U. S. A. Medical Corps, is admirable and eliminates not only grease, but also oil.

COOK'S OUTFIT.—The African always cooks by putting stones close together to act as a sort of range, and then building a little fire between them. He likes small sauce-pans with straight handles, *sufurias*, instead of kettles. The cook needs three of these, a

frying pan, a large kettle for boiling drinking-water, a large meat knife, and a meat board; the addition of a little hash-machine for mincing will make a vast difference to the edibility of a tough, old beast. An enamel-ware basin, soap, towel, candles, a lantern, a bucket, and a baker complete the cook's outfit. All these articles, as well as the bath-tub, &c., can be got cheapest from Suliman Virgee, Nairobi.

PERSONAL OUTFIT.—Warm blankets are essential, for the nights are sometimes bitterly cold. I had three, and made Asmanie sew them up into a sleeping-bag, which is much the simplest on a camp-bed. On the march all our blankets, coats, &c., were safe from drenching in my Wolsey valise. Boots should be both light and strong, one pair nailed, and one with roughened leather: a rubber-soled pair I had were useless in a fortnight. Silence is often essential, and several pairs of ordinary sand-shoes are as good as anything for use in stalking shy game. Wear the thickest socks you can get, and take a good number of pairs; for evening use in the camp a pair of high, soft mosquito-boots are advisable. These can be bought in Nairobi. Other necessities are two pairs of putties, obtainable from any Indian store; some thin khaki trousers, one thick pair of underclothes and two of thin, two flannel shirts fitted with spine pads, a light shooting coat, a sweater, and either a thick coat or an ulster for the evenings. C. had the best waterproof suit I have ever seen; a coat and breeches of thin, green rubber, which rolled up small enough to go in his pocket.

The only protections against the sun necessary in the East African highlands are a good sun helmet or a double terai (a felt hat of double thickness), ~~and a~~

232 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

spine-pad. A pith helmet is useless after rain, but it is light and comfortable. The cook, and tent-boy can easily carry spare helmets, and the best plan is to have a Service waterproof one as well as the other, but do not forget the terai. This is far less in the way among the thorns, and personally I always hunted in mine, and let the syce carry it when I was merely riding along, as I found the helmet cooler. Get the terai in London; all the rest can be got in Nairobi, or the helmet can be bought at Simon Artz, Port Said, on the way out. See that it comes well down over the sides of the head and back of the neck, but such precautions as shirts and jackets of Solaro "sunproof" cloth, which let rain right through and go to pieces among the thorns, underclothing dyed black, or a layer of tinfoil in the spine-pad, are quite unnecessary in East Africa. Take a small toilet kit, and in it, if you would save much trouble, a little clipper for your inevitable beard.

SPECTACLES.—For those who need them, spectacles are the most important thing of all. Be sure that you take many pairs, or your whole trip may be ruined. I took six pairs in all; two I broke at once, a third lasted me through. Do not pack them all in one load; gold rims are advisable, as these do not rust, and the glare of the dry, yellow plain or the sandy stretches will be enormously relieved by the possession of a pair of slightly tinted glasses.

BOOKS, &C.—Books and papers must be taken in a special box, or certain disorder will result. If you hire a man to look after your safari for you, you will undoubtedly have much time for reading; if you do it yourself, you most certainly will not. ~~Some accounts~~ should be kept if you are anxious to

know about the workings of the safari. The ideal is to have a stock-book showing the number of loads of each kind of food on hand, beans and Mahindi for the Kikuyu, cracked Mahindi for the horses, and *posho* for the professional porters; also the state of your own larder. Somewhere in this book should be an inventory of every article bought for the safari, and, if issued to a man, to whom issued. One book is not merely advisable, but necessary, and that is a book containing the name of every man in the safari, the date he was signed on, his rating, scale of wages, and any advances taken or fines incurred; add his tribe if you are sufficiently interested in your men. I tried to tackle some of this book-work, but it was sometimes rather arduous. I remember C. calling to me once, "Oh, by the way, Ogunga took a rupee advance the other day, and I had to fine Amisi one; and, oh yes, Asmanie took 60 cents to buy eggs with." Still the interest repaid the trouble.

PERSONAL FOOD.—The most ridiculous notions are prevalent about the sportsman's own food. Man after man goes to the trouble and expense of bringing out huge quantities of tinned food from home, and nothing could possibly be more unnecessary. Take exactly what you would for any ordinary camping, and get every bit of it in Africa; take a reasonable quantity from Nairobi, and take on new loads as required from the little Indian stores at the government posts you pass. There is no more sense in carrying everything the whole way round than there is in shipping it all out from home. Get the best white flour at 4 rupees a load of 60 lb., and reckon a pound a man a day; make the cook use yeast

234 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

and not baking powder. Sugar is obtainable everywhere at 14 rupees a load, and excellent sugar at that. Kikuyu beans at 50 cents to 1½ rupees a load are as good as any one need ask for; and the green corn-cobs, either roasted or boiled and eaten with butter, are absolutely delicious. Potatoes and onions can usually be bought at the outlying posts, and excellent Somali rice always. Tinned preserves lose their attraction when Wanderobo honey can be obtained for next to nothing; but there is one thing which cannot be got good in East Africa, and that is dried fruit; so a few cans of fruit in syrup are worth taking in spite of their weight. Evaporated cream can be got nearly everywhere. Plenty of bacon and lard must be taken, for the African animals carry little fat, and what you need in cooking must be carried. Cocoa is handier than tea, and a little pepper, salt, lime-juice, and curry-powder will complete a list ample enough for any sportsman. Take it all in the ordinary chop-boxes, and see that the cook hangs up the meat you shoot in a gauze-bag: as a rule he will be disgustingly casual about such a trifle.

II.—CAMP EQUIPMENT FOR THE MEN

TENTS.—Any one who is careful for the well-being of his men will see that they are properly provided with tents: at the least, it is economical to do so on a long trip, since a sick man cannot carry a load. Two grades of porters' tents are supplied, and slight enough things they are; they stand about 3 feet high, and weigh, with poles and all, about 4 or 5 lb., yet any number of men will crowd into each one. Seven is supposed to be the regulation number, and the tribes

keep together.* The cheaper tents can be got at any outfitter for 5 or 6 rupees or from the Indians for $4\frac{1}{2}$; better ones, made of canvas, are more expensive in relation to the quality used. If the cheaper are used, it is as well in rainy weather to issue enough second quality Americani (cotton sheeting) to make tent-flies; the little tents will be reasonably waterproof equipped with these. To the men of each tent should be allotted one large *sufuria* (cooking-pot), together with one large enamel-ware plate and cooking-spoon. The best *sufurias* have bottoms of copper, others bottoms of brass, and there are also aluminium ones, which are expensive and unpopular. Those with bottoms of copper can be got from the Indians at the rate of 13 annas per lb. or from the outfitters at 1 rupee 25 cents per lb.

FOOD FOR THE MEN.—The regular portion of the ordinary porter is one *kababa* (tin) of Mahindi Unga, that is, $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of corn-meal a day. But there are many grades of this *posho*, and the men are experts at telling them apart; the fine native-ground is much more appreciated than the coarser mill-ground meal; take a trusty porter with you as a taster, and the Indian will then not cheat you as to quality. The price varies extremely, but you can rely on the knowledge that the first quotation, whether by white man or Indian, is far above the market-rate. It should run in Nairobi or on the railway from 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ rupees a load; it was grown round Nyeri, and we bought it there after our auction for $1\frac{1}{2}$ rupees, and again at Rumuruti we paid the Somali's cousin $3\frac{1}{2}$. The Kikuyu are only entitled to a daily *kababa* of Kikuyu beans, but we gave them a $\frac{1}{2}$ *kababa* of *posho* and a $\frac{1}{2}$ *kababa* of Kikuyu beans. All natives will demand specialties

236 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

as soon as they are put in a place of any importance, such as cook or tent-boy, but do not give it them. Somalis, however, insist on rice, sugar, tea and ghee; they are a perfect nuisance in consequence, are always the cause of jealousy, and cost nearly as much to feed as a white man.

MEN'S PERSONAL OUTFIT.—This will vary with the place at which you sign them on; in outlying districts only a blanket is demanded, and not even this if the engagement be temporary. In Nairobi, by regulation, each man must have a blanket, a jersey and a water-bottle; for these the outfitters charge 5 rupees, but you can get the same, and if you trade well, better articles from the Indians for half that; a blanket costs a rupee everywhere, but Meghi Amad and Co. will sell you a slightly larger one than usual for a little less, if you buy in quantity; the jersey should cost 75 cents and the tin water-bottle the same. Your skimmers will need knives; the "bushman's friend" is good enough for yourself as well, and costs a rupee—get a dozen, and you will not regret it.

III.—GENERAL CAMP EQUIPMENT

TENTS, AXES, &C.—It is most advisable to have a large green canvas tent-fly to cover the loads at night. We took one large enough not only to cover the loads, but also to act as a stable for the horse and mule, and on bad nights to shelter the askari on guard. It was also often useful to protect drying skins from a sudden downpour. A number of vessels for carrying water to camp must be taken, and you cannot do better than to get 10-gallon oil-cans; they cost fifty rupees each, but half-a-dozen or more are not too many, for

they wear out, and also the men are glad of them to boil meat in. If you get axes, the men are sure to break the handles; half-a-dozen *pangas* (knives) will be better and be useful for cutting firewood and for a thousand other odd jobs. The best *pangas* have the figure of a rhino stamped on them and cost about two rupees; they are shaped like a Cuban machete, and used for everything from digging holes to cutting down trees. Take a considerable amount of light line—three balls of Marlin for quantity and quality—the men, who are marvellous knot-tiers, use it for fastening up their loads, and the stuff usually sold for that purpose is quite rotten. A few rockets to be used as signals may be added to the outfit with advantage.

HORSE, MULE, &c.—The animals you take depend of course on the purpose of your trip. If you intend to ride lion, you must have a horse; if you do not, a mule is as good and requires much less attention. A horse must be looked after with the greatest care, and even then may die; the mysterious disease of horse-sickness is a curse, and there are only a few European horses in the whole Protectorate: the little Abyssinian or Somali ponies are there instead, and have to take their chance. You must carry food for your pony, and he must not eat grass until the dew is off the ground; where a mule will grow fat, a pony will starve. For either beast take a good blanket covered with water-proof canvas. These can be got in Nairobi second-hand for 10 rupees; take also a strong halter and a currycomb, and always see to it yourself that your syce uses the currycomb and gets the last tick off: it may be necessary to threaten to fine him for every tick you find left on your animal.

IV.—FIELD-KIT,

Your field-kit stands for the various articles that you take with you hunting, and it is well worth spending both time and trouble over the best way of carrying it; upon it depends not only the success of your hunting, but often your safety and that of your men.

FIELD-GLASSES.—Next in importance to your rifle, indeed almost co-ordinate with it, are your field-glasses. Take two pairs, for a fall or other accident may easily render one useless. It is most convenient to carry them with the leather round your neck and the glasses themselves in the breast-pocket of your shirt; it is a good plan too to have the focus adjusted to your eyes and then set with a screw so that it cannot be altered, and the glasses are always ready for instant use; when they are wanted, they are wanted quickly, and to carry them in a case is to go without them. Glasses of a higher power than 8 are no good; they merely intensify the dancing heat rays.

CARTRIDGES.—When you have gunboys with you, there is no need to carry many cartridges yourself; their weight is oppressive, and a tired man shoots badly. It is as well, though, always to have a few rounds for each rifle on you, so that, whatever rifle you have, you can at least fire a few shots instantly. Cartridge belts of the kind which have a series of little pockets, each covered with a flap, are far and away the best possible means of carrying cartridges; they are protected from rain, and can be got at much more quickly than from a bandolier or coat-pocket. See that your gunboy is amply supplied, and that he always carries the same cartridges in the same place.

Carry a little spare ammunition in your saddle pockets, for, when mounted, you are quite apt to be alone.

COMPASS.—However successfully you acquire the homing instinct, carry a compass and know how to use it; it is surprising to see how many men carry a compass to prevent their getting lost exactly as an old gentleman carries a horse-chestnut to keep away rheumatism. Get a good compass with a needle which sets quickly; the English marching compass, which has the east and west reversed like a surveyor's compass, is excellent; with this you merely point the north of the dial the way you are going and read your direction from the north-end of the needle.

MATCHES, FOOD, AND WATER.—Never be without matches: you may want to camp out, and in any case they are invaluable for showing the direction of light air-currents; in the jungle the wind is often so slight that a match alone will give it. Carry them in a box which is really water-tight and not merely said to be. In Africa it is distinctly risky to drink unboiled water, and an aluminium water-bottle, covered with leather or felt, should invariably be taken; the addition of a little lime-juice makes a very refreshing drink. Never leave camp to go even a short distance without both food and water; the unexpected may happen and many hours elapse before you return. Carry at least a part of your lunch yourself; some bread and a little tin of potted meat or a piece of cold meat should be enough for any one.

ANTISEPTICS.—An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure—when you are hunting a beast like a lion, whose claws and teeth are poisoned by much tearing of putrid flesh, it is only common precaution to take a small amount of the strongest

240 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

antiseptic with you. A little bottle of permanganate of potash crystals is good; better still, take a vial, cased in wood, containing 95 per cent. carbolic acid (a saturate solution of carbolic acid crystals in glycerine): take also a bit of lint and bandage and a couple of $\frac{1}{4}$ gr. tablets of morphine.

KNIFE, NOTE-BOOK, &C.—Carry a knife which is good and serviceable, and, above all, sharp. Then, even if you are alone, you are not helpless if you want to skin and dress an animal. Get a reasonably small knife with a thin blade of soft steel, for this can be sharpened on a stone: see that it goes far into its sheath, and so will not fall out; avoid all abominations sold as "hunting-knives"; the ordinary "bushman's friend," mentioned before, is good enough for anything. Your gunboy can carry, if desired, a little bag containing a small file for sharpening knives, a note-book, a measuring tape, and a very light set of scales for getting the weight of animals. A tiny lantern and a bit of candle are worth adding in case you are caught out after dark. Insist on one of your boys taking a jacket or sweater; the evenings turn quite cold, and you can take no chances with your health in Africa.

PISTOL.—When you are after lion or buffalo, a pistol should theoretically be carried; many a man who has been badly mauled, would have saved himself if he had taken the trouble to carry one, but theory is seldom put into practice. A .380 Colt automatic pistol is not really too heavy and should be taken; the .45 Colt is far more powerful, but is just heavy enough to insure its being left in camp.

V.—RIFLES

The rifles a man uses are so much a matter of individual choice, and so many are now excellent, that there is little need to dwell upon them here. A man may take out a great many, but he will find, as we did, that he uses two, or at most three, to the exclusion of all others. C. had a whole battery of veterans, but he relied almost entirely upon his Springfield U. S. army rifle and his .405 Winchester; for dangerous game at close quarters he used a 12 bore, adapted to the modern high velocity explosive. I had a double-barrelled .360 express, made by W. Evans, 63 Pall Mall, London, and hardly used another weapon: I found this calibre admirably suited for use in all species of game from a steinbuck to a rhino; for buffalo in the long grass I took C.'s old 8 bore (*kubwa bunduki*): this was also adapted to take a charge of Sharpshooter powder, an American powder similar to cordite but with the advantage of uniformity in all temperatures, and it struck a blow estimated at 5,000 lb. It was of course exceedingly cumbrous, but its effectiveness at close range was colossal.

A few old guns are necessary to lend to the askaris; they insist upon one as the insignia of their grade, but they are equally happy and far less dangerous if the cartridge be clipped down in the magazine of a magazine rifle or a double-barrelled rifle locked at safety. Beyond these, two really reliable rifles are all a man requires; one of a calibre of from .303 to .360 for general use, and the other a heavy double-barrelled rifle of from .450 to .577 or even .600; the heavier this is the better, for it will be needed to check a charge, and the blow it strikes is the important

242 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

thing. In elephant country, C. screwed a Maxim silencer on to the end of his rifle, and it deadened the sound amazingly. Take a shot-gun—not one you value, though; excellent sport offers itself in many places, but the noise is usually a fatal objection, and it will not be often used. Like your rifles, when not in use, it should be carried in a gun-cover; a gun-case is an encumbrance, and remains damp for days after African rain; a gun-cover is easily dried, and protects the barrels from innumerable knocks and scratches.

VI.—MEDICAL AND SURGICAL

The responsibility for the health of from fifty to a hundred men is a heavy one, and deserves a thought and consideration which it all too seldom receives. Any man who purposes travelling far off the beaten track should acquire a smattering of medicine; it is not a question merely of his own health, but that of all the men who serve under him; and the constant necessity for *dawa* (medicine) has already been shown in Chapter VII. Viewed even from the most selfish standpoint the health of the men is synonymous with the efficiency of the safari, and yet usually the subject is dismissed in a few lines of general and vague recommendation. Unless a man is indifferent whether his servants live or die—and it must not be forgotten that they have no notion of looking after themselves—he will want to know something more. A medicine-chest is an absolute essential; it should contain an ample supply for all the usual and expected ailments, and in addition a large excess for the exceptional, such as being caught by a lion. The medical side of the outfit is not nearly so extensive as the surgical.

CATHARTIC; &C.—Most of the troubles are from over-eating. The men will stuff themselves with half-cooked meat until they are at the bursting point, and then they will come with their hands on their stomachs, murmuring, "*Bwana, mini tumbo mbaya sana*" (Master, my stomach is very, very bad). Give them half a tumbler of castor-oil, and the same amount of Epsom salts with water, or three compound cathartic pills—half measures are entirely inoperative on an African native, and a prodigious amount of cathartic will most certainly be needed on any trip. Much space can be saved by taking nearly everything in tabloids, but it is much more expensive. Keep some castor-oil in reserve in case of dysentery, and for this eventuality take also a syringe to wash out the lower intestines.

"Sun" cholera pills, camphor, and opium or some similar compound should be taken in considerable quantities; ordinarily use two tablets for yourself and four for the men. A little calomel is useful to have, and plenty of soda-mints. These latter are perfectly harmless, and can be given to a man who needs some dose, and you haven't the slightest idea what; tell him that they are very powerful medicine, and he will undoubtedly be well next day; the probability is he will be.

QUININE.—This is a most important drug. In fever districts, take a preventive dose of five grains on Saturday and ten on Sunday regularly; this is better than a daily dose of one grain. Fever is usually in low parts of the country near water, and for malarial fever the presence of the *Anopheles* mosquito is necessary; you can tell this species, because he stands with his body perpendicular and not horizontal, and

244 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

with his two hind legs over his back. Except for the tsetse fly and spirillum tick, he is the most noxious bug in all Africa. When fever is once on you, take heavy doses, 20 or 30 grains when your temperature falls after an attack, for then the germs are free in the blood, and can be acted upon by the drug. If the quinine is unavailing, try 10-15 grains of phenacetin. The bisulphate of quinine is preferable to the sulphate; it is more soluble, and can be given with a hypodermic syringe. There are probably many little-known African fevers, for which the mosquito is not responsible, but as a rule, if you have fever take quinine.

HYPODERMIC SYRINGE.—No one should use a hypodermic syringe unless he has previously taken the trouble to learn a little about it; any one who has should most certainly take one, together with the necessary drugs, for it will often be most useful, and may save more than one life on a trip. If you use it, always boil the whole thing first and get an all-glass or an all-metal one. Cocaine is specially useful in all kinds of small operations where you would otherwise cause a great deal of pain. The usual solution is a tablet of $1\frac{1}{2}$ gr. in 30 drops of water. When the wound is large, and you wish to use a considerable quantity, dilute to $\frac{1}{10}$ per cent. solution, and, if necessary, inject 10 barrels. Use a 4 per cent. solution on the mucous membrane, lips, inside mouth, eyes, &c., and merely drop it on, for the mucous membrane will of itself absorb cocaine. When used on the skin, put your needle only a short distance into the skin and inject a small quantity; when you see a white circle round the needle, inject again towards its edge; by keeping inside its increasing area you will save the

patient the pain of fresh injections. In pulling teeth push your needle well down to the roots and inject plenty of the solution.

SURGERY AND DENTISTRY.—For the surgical and emergency side you will need a little set of instruments, one or more small scalpels, two pairs of forceps (one rat-toothed and one plain), two pairs of surgical scissors, several probes, a light pair of bone-clippers, one or two pairs of tooth forceps and three pairs of artery forceps; these last will not only shut off arterics, but also hold your needles in sewing as well as a regular needle-holder. It is worth remembering that no real pulling is necessary to extract teeth. C. said he should never forget the first tooth he ever pulled. It was in Western Alaska in the lobby of a little hotel filled with much-amused gold-miners; he was using a pair of wire-clippers and pulled as a waiter pulls in extracting a cork from a bottle. When the tooth did finally come out, he was bathed in perspiration, a game of poker had been broken up to watch, the entire Indian village was crowded in the doors and windows, and it was only the greatest good luck which saved several innocent teeth from coming out together with the offender. Any dentist will show you how the thing can be done quite easily by merely bending the tooth in or out according to the jaw you are attacking, until the roots break loose and it comes free without further trouble.

For sewing up cuts take a number of needles of different curves and sizes, threaded with catgut and done up in germ-proof envelopes. The best thing for sewing up surface-wounds is horsehair: pull a hair out of your horse's tail, sterilise it, and you have all you need. A small, hard, rubber syringe is necessary

246 BABES IN THE AFRICAN WOOD

for washing out wounds; there is nothing in your outfit you will use more often. For your instruments take a little copper steriliser in which they can be boiled before use.

ANTISEPTICS, &C.—Take carbolic acid, corrosive sublimate, and perhaps permanganate of potash; carbolic is best carried in crystal form in a vial, cased in wood. A solution of 1 to 50 is a good, strong solution for use in a bad wound; but dilute still more if you use wet carbolic dressings, for too strong carbolic thus applied may cause gangrene. Take glycerine with you to obtain a really strong solution; a saturate solution with glycerine gives a 95 per cent. solution, which should be used only to cauterise an infected wound such as a lion bite or scratch, jigger hole, and, most frequent of all, thorn-stab. Never let any little thorn-wound go untended; things that would not matter at home will surely go septic in Africa; pull the thorns out, and run a hollow probe containing the 95 per cent. solution into the hole. This is not pleasant, but it is distinctly necessary. Always apply alcohol immediately after the strong carbolic to neutralise the excess and prevent it from burning more than is desired; we found so many of the small cuts go septic that towards the end C. treated most of them in this way, though of course it burnt the tissues and made them much longer in healing.

We found germicidal soap and a good nail-brush absolutely invaluable for washing the injuries of the men and for use in our foot-bath; it was probably because of this we escaped the curse of jiggers. Take plenty of carbolated petroleum and vaseline; it is useful for the thousand little scratches, not only on yourself and your men, but on your animals as well.

For inflamed eyes, make a saturate solution of boracic acid ; dilute it one half, and wash the eyes three times a day.

Bandages and lint should be taken in very large quantities, enough and to spare for some large and serious happening, which you hope and expect will not occur. For the same reason take a can of ether—chloroform is much too dangerous to be used by a layman—and two cans of alcohol. You will doubtless have whisky elsewhere, but a bottle of brandy should be somewhere in the medicine-chest for use in an emergency.

All this wealth of outfit may seem excessive, especially to men who have had experience of very different conditions in healthier climates. A man can live in the Highlands of British East Africa in splendid health, but he can take no risks whatever; he must never forget that he is in Africa and right on the line of the Equator. At any rate, I have only given what my companion and I worked out for ourselves, and found necessary either in fact or by way of precaution.

I would add as a final word for those who are fortunate enough to be able to choose their time of going, avoid the "safari-season." This begins about the end of September, and during it the favourite routes are dotted with parties of sportsmen from Europe; every one is disgustingly trying to elude every one else, and all the game is disturbed. We started at the end of June, and, though this date had some drawbacks, as the long grass near Embu showed, we met only one hunting safari from first to last, and that one was the safari of a man resident in the country.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

